DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 285 SO 007 857

TITLE	Public Education and the Future of America.
INSTITUTION	Educational Policies Commission, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	55
NOTE	105p.; Out of Print
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$5.40 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Equality; *Educational History; Educational Opportunities; Educational Philosophy; Educational Practice; Elementary Education; *Foundations of Education; Futures (of Society); Higher Education; *Public Education; *Public Schools; Secondary Education; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This publication presents a history of public education in the United States from the colonial schools up to the early 1950's. Among the topics discussed are the following: (1) American principles behind public education, (2) the foundations of universal public education, (3) building an educated citizenry through public elementary schools, (4) expanding educational opportunity through public high schools and universities, (5) establishment of the American public educational systems, (6) increasing educational opportunity through the establishment of public schools, (7) establishing special schools to prepare teachers, (8) serving the American people through public schools, (9) education in the 1950's, and (10) public education and the role it will play in the future of America. (Author/RM)

ED 097285

Public Education and the Future of America

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

NEA

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

SP 007 857

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION
National Education Association of the United States
and the American Association of School Administrators
1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington 6, D. C.

COPYRIGHT 1955
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 54-12519

WARE of the widespread concern of Americans for their public schools and of the important efforts at reappraisal of public education that are now under way, sensing the enduring influence of decisions that this generation must make about its schools, and convinced that the unique values and practices in the American educational tradition deserve renewed attention in current discussions, the Educational Policies Commission presents this volume: *Public Education and the Future of America.*

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

SARAH C. CALDWELL[1]
Chairman, 1953-54

WILLIAM JANSEN
Chairman, 1954-55

N. D. MCCOMBS[1]
Vice-Chairman, 1953-54

L. D. HASKEW
Vice-Chairman, 1954-55

O. C. ADERHOLD
JOHN L. BRACKEN
L. FRAZER BANKS
RALPH J. BUNCHE
WILLIAM G. CARR
WILLIAM A. EARLY[1]
GALEN JONES[1]
JORDAN L. LARSON
LILLIAN LARSON
ALICE LATTA
FRANC L. MCCLUER
WORTH MCCLURE
RALPH W. MCDONALD
KENNETH E. OBERHOLTZER
EVA M. OTT
MARGARET C. SCHOWENGERDT
WAURINE WALKER
PEARL A. WANAMAKER
HERMAN B. WELLS
EUGENE YOUNGERT

HOWARD E. WILSON, *Secretary*
WILBUR F. MURRA, *Assistant Secretary*

[1] Terms ended July 1954

THE Educational Policies Commission acknowledges its indebtedness to LAWRENCE A. CREMIN, associate professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Cremin's scholarship and enthusiasm, both in discussions with the Commission and its staff and in the drafting of manuscript, were fundamental in the development of this volume. The Commission itself, of course, assumes full responsibility for the content of the statement as here published.

The basic manuscript for this statement was formally approved in June 1954. Further consideration was given the report at a meeting of the Commission in October 1954, at which time final approval was given the document in its present form.

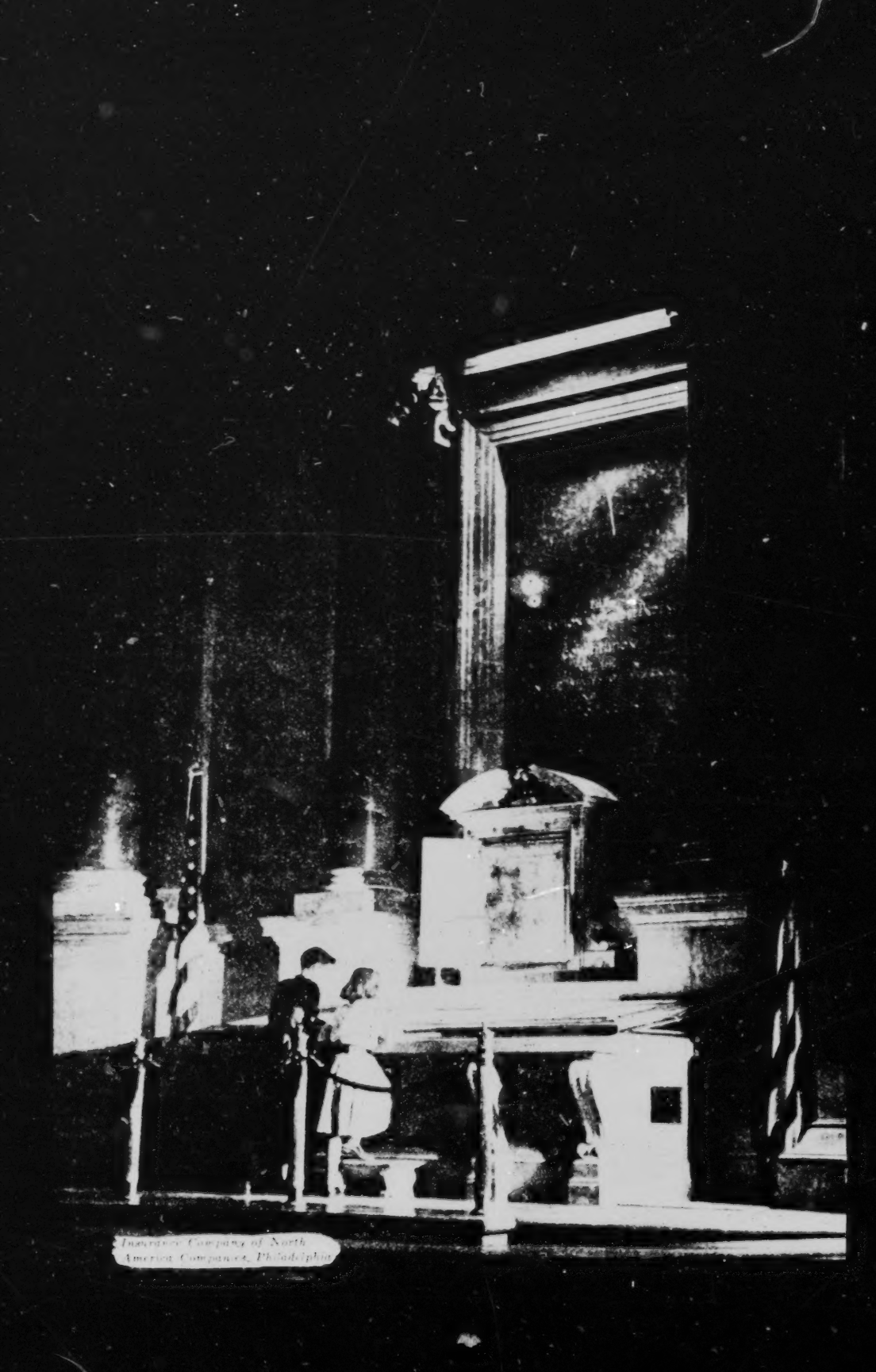
The recommendations in this publication are those of the Educational Policies Commission, a commission of the National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators. Publication in this form does not constitute formal approval by the sponsoring associations.

Contents

Chapter		Page
1.	Public Education and Some Great American Principles	1
2.	The Foundations of Universal Public Education	9
3.	Toward a Universal Common School	27
4.	Toward Equality of Educational Opportunity	39
5.	Toward Professional Teacher Education	55
6.	How Public Schools Have Served the American People	65
7.	Education in an Era of Decision	77
8.	Public Education and the Future of America	83

CHAPTER 1

Public Education and Some Great American Principles


Insurance Company of North
America Companies, Philadelphia

AMERICANS, traditionally a practical people, have always been deeply conscious of certain ideals. For generations they have cherished the values of freedom, equality, and self-government in their national heritage. Twisted on occasion by demagogues and threatened by would-be tyrants, these values have endured through almost two centuries of national development. Allegiance to them grows stronger with the passing decades.

Consider for a moment one of the early documents in which these ideals were proclaimed: the *Declaration of Independence*. In the most simple, terse, and forthright terms, it presents the components of an ideal which, since 1776, has inspired men the world over: all men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; whenever any government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government which shall seem to them more likely to effect their

liberty and happiness. To these principles of the *Declaration* —to freedom, equality, and self-government—the colonists bound themselves, thus paving the way for "a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

From these pre-eminent values—stated so forcefully and succinctly—one can derive the most basic principles and practices of American life. In them, for example, is rooted the whole commitment to individual liberty—the freedoms of speech, of the press, of conscience, of assembly, and of organization; the right freely to work and to pursue craft, business, trade, or profession; freedom of the individual from arbitrary acts of government; and opportunity for each individual to seek in his own way those material and spiritual ends which promise to give meaning to his life. Closely related to these are the most fundamental procedures of American government —peaceful elections; respect for the representative process; the separation of powers; government by law, not by men. These values are also expressed in equality before the law, the right to trial by jury, and the social and political equality of different religious, ethnic, and racial groups. Indeed, the principles of freedom, equality, and self-government constitute the heart that gives life to the American body politic.

How the Founding Fathers Looked to Education To Support the Principles of Democracy

The world's greatest thinkers have realized that education is always related to the purposes of the society which supports it. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin—all sought to work out educational principles to serve the political, social, and religious systems they advocated. It is not at all surprising, then, that the men who formulated the great principles of the *Declaration* also gave careful attention to the matter of education. Realizing

that men are not born trained to defend freedom, equality, and self-government, they saw that if the Republic was to endure, a suitable education of the people would have to be designed.

Witness, for instance, the advice of Washington in his *Farewell Address* to his countrymen: "Promote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened." Jefferson, too, offered similar counsel: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

John Adams, James Madison, John Quincy Adams all joined in the belief that the foundation of a democratic-republican society must be in the education of the citizenry. Moreover, such an education, in its organization, content, goal, and method, would have to aim at producing men and women who could intelligently share the rights and responsibilities of freedom and self-government. The story of how American leaders, both liberal and conservative, sought to design and build just such an education is the story of the American public school.

The good education of youth has been esteemed by wise men in all ages as the surest foundation of the happiness both of private families and of commonwealths.

—Benjamin Franklin

I view it [education] as the most important subject we as a people can be engaged in.

—Abraham Lincoln

Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education—without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained.

—James A. Garfield

Without popular education no government which rests on popular action can long endure.

—Woodrow Wilson

Education must light the path for social change. The social and economic problems confronting us are growing in complexity. The more complex and difficult these problems become, the more essential it is to provide broad and complete education; that kind of education that will equip us as a nation to decide these problems for the best interest of all concerned. Our ultimate security, to a large extent, is based upon the individual's character, information, and attitude—and the responsibility rests squarely upon those who direct education in America.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Because our schools help shape the mind and character of our youth, the strength or weakness of our educational system today will go far to determine the strength or weakness of our national wisdom and our national morality tomorrow. That is why it is essential to our nation that we have good schools. And their quality depends on all of us.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

How Freedom, Equality, and Self-Government Are Today Challenged

Recent decades have witnessed the rise of sustained and powerful challenges to the principles of freedom, equality, and self-government. Not a few of these challenges derive from the vast transformation in American life brought about by science and technology, by industrial, agricultural, and commercial revolutions. Inherent in this transformation are profound political, economic, and social changes which have actually brought into being a new America—one which is firmly built in the image of the past but which is also in many ways strikingly different. In the face of this vast transformation, there exists a critical need for strengthening the traditional principles of freedom, equality, and self-government which are at the core of the American way of life.

These same forces of science, technology, and industrialism —and it should be remembered that they have deeply influenced not only the United States but also the whole Western world—have also made possible the rise of twentieth-century totalitarian despotism. In the past the main attack on democracy was based on aristocratic motives, urging that certain men by reason of superior birth, wealth, class, race, religion, or culture should rule and that all others should follow. Only in this way, it was said, could the so-called "tyranny of the masses" be avoided. More recently the most powerful attacks have come from totalitarian ideologies which proclaim the necessity of total state regulation. Thus, Fascism argues that the state and its perpetuation are all important, that individuals must subordinate their needs and interests to this goal, and that a leader and an elite party are necessary to carry out the task. Since the leader and the elite claim to know what is good for the state, the Fascists hold no allegiance to freedom, equality, or self-government; they believe only in obedience of the many to the few.

Communist theory, on the other hand, argues that true liberty and equality cannot exist until the proletariat takes the power of the government into its own hands through a revolution engineered by an elite Communist leadership. Because this leadership claims to know what is good for the people, Communists assert that the people do not need freedom and self-government until after the revolution is successful. At that point, theoretical Communism asserts, "true" liberty and equality will somehow mysteriously emerge.

Totalitarian arguments, either Fascist or Communist, are opposed to freedom, equality, and self-government. Indeed, in their essential distrust of the people themselves, they deny those principles which form the heart of American life. Herein lies the threat to American values from those who have embraced one or the other of these antidemocratic ideologies—those who through subversion, conspiracy, and revolution would embark on the Communist road, and those who through demagoguery and the suspension of individual liberty would embark on the Fascist road.

In sum, powerful challenges from without and from within place the American people at one of the major crossroads of their history. Whether they can continue to strengthen their values in the service of democracy will depend largely on their faith, their resourcefulness, and their good judgment. These qualities may be cultivated and enhanced by education.

Why American Democracy Needs a Distinctive Education

That education alone cannot equip the American people to meet these challenges is apparent; but that it can play a vital role is equally obvious. However, only an education specifically designed to support and advance freedom, equality, and self-government will do so. One cannot wisely put his faith uncritically in just any kind of education no matter how much

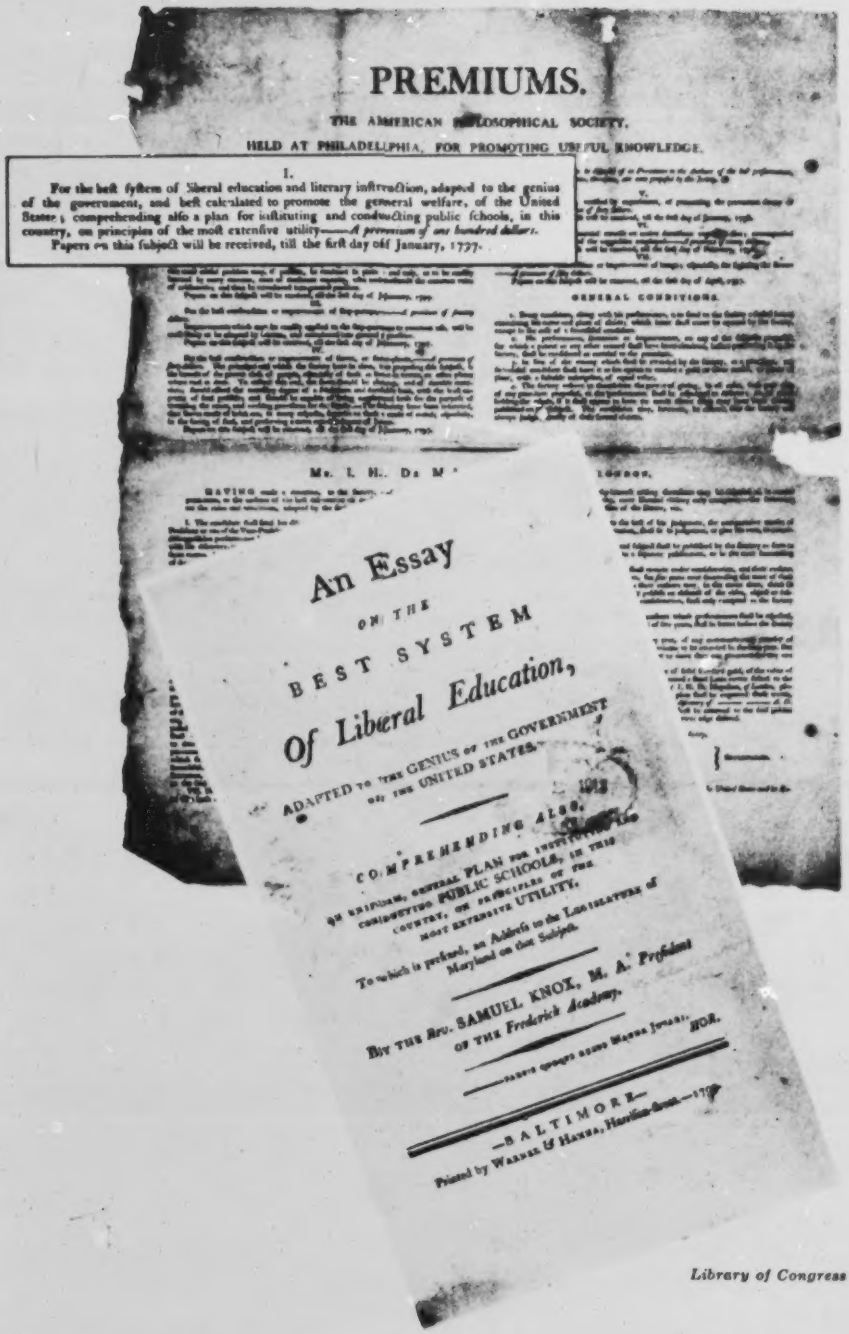
there is of it. Antidemocratic and totalitarian nations are as vitally interested in education as are the democracies. Few of the latter have been as concerned with schools as Nazi Germany, prewar Japan, and contemporary Russia. The crucial question, then, is the *kind* as well as the *extent* of education. Americans today more than ever need an education consistent with the principles of their distinctive way of life.

Coffeyville (Kansas) Public Schools

A source of profound strength lies in the American educational heritage. For more than a century, the American people have sought to develop an education uniquely designed to further their way of life; the product of their labor has been the American public school. Nowhere else in the world is there a school approaching it in character, scope, magnitude, and responsibility. Designed especially for their task, public schools have stood—and now stand—as great wellsprings of freedom, equality, and self-government. They must continue as supporters and guardians of the American way of life.

CHAPTER 2

The Foundations of Universal Public Education



PREMIUMS.

THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, FOR PROMOTING USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

I.

For the beſt ſyſtem of liberal education and literary inſtruction, adapted to the genius of the government, and beſt calculated to promote the general welfare, of the United States; comprehending alſo a plan for inſtituting and conducting public ſchools, in this country, on principles of the moſt extenſive utility——*A premium of one hundred dollars.*

Papers on this ſubject will be received, till the firſt day of January, 1797.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

Mr. I. H. Da M'

LONDON.

An Essay

ON THE

BEST SYSTEM

Of Liberal Education,

ADAPTED TO THE GENIUS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

COMPREHENDING ALSO,

AN ORIGINAL, GENERAL PLAN FOR INSTITUTING AND CONDUCTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, IN THIS COUNTRY, ON PRINCIPLES OF THE MOST EXTENSIVE UTILITY.

To which is prefixed, an Address to the Legislature of Maryland on that Subject.

BY THE Rev. SAMUEL KNOX, M. A. Preſident OF THE *Frederick Academy.*

——BALTIMORE——

Printed by WARNER & HANNA, Hanover-ſtreet.—1799.

Library of Congress

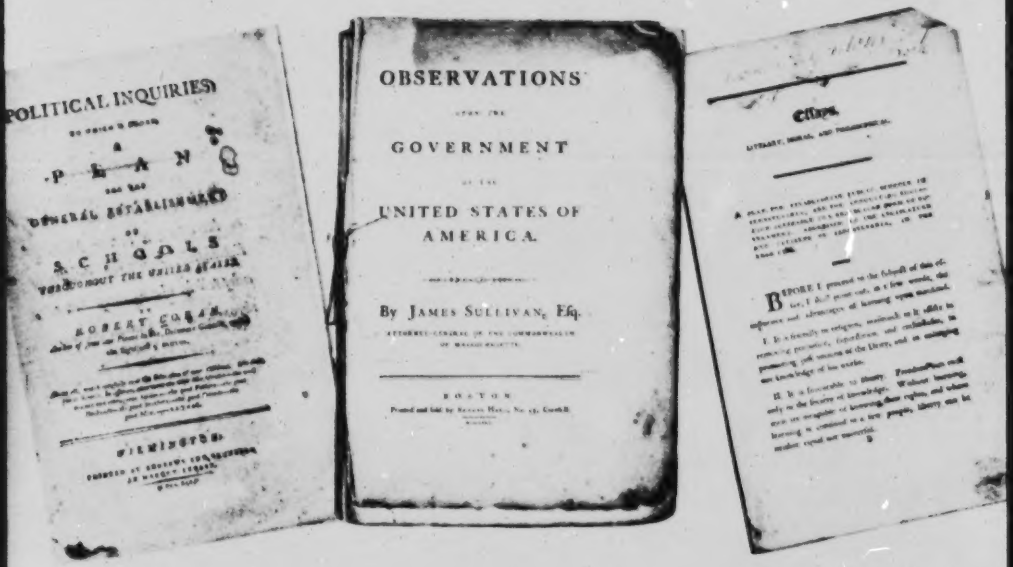
WHEN the colonists came to the New World they brought with them time-honored ways of schooling. From the earliest years colonial schools carried on their work in much the same way as comparable European schools of the day. When Harvard was founded in 1636 it offered a program of studies very much like the curriculum at Cambridge in England. Grammar schools in the different colonies taught the Latin and Greek that were taught in European secondary schools. Early elementary schools, from New Hampshire to Georgia, purveyed the limited fare of reading, writing, arithmetic, and sectarian religion, which then constituted the elementary-school program throughout the Western world.

Although some of the New England colonies moved early to establish public elementary and secondary schools, most colonial schools were privately supported and privately controlled. Since one of the most important purposes of education was deemed to be preparation for religious orthodoxy, many colonial schools were church institutions. Others were controlled by boards of trustees operating under charters from

colonial legislatures. Still others were simply private business ventures. Few people attended school at all, and most of those who did had to pay tuition. Where schooling was free it was usually provided as some sort of charity to those unable to afford it. Colonial education tended to reflect the European "two-class system." For the upper classes, the traditional education of secondary schools and colleges was deemed appropriate; for everyone else, schooling was at best a limited kind of elementary curriculum.

How American Leaders Recognized the Need for a New Kind of Education

As the principles of the *Declaration* began to make themselves felt, a growing number of American leaders sensed the need for an education different in organization, program, and outlook from the colonial and European pattern. After the national government was established, various proposals were put forward for a school system particularly designed to further the ideals of the republic. A Philadelphia physician, a New England jurist, a Delaware author—all wrote suggestions for a *new American* education. In 1796 the American Philosophical Society offered a prize for the educational plan best designed to meet the needs of the young republic. Throughout all these plans ran themes destined to become central in American educational thinking: that schools should serve the whole citizenry; that they should nurture loyalty to the nation; that they should be supported and controlled by civil government rather than left to private means; that the school program should provide the electorate with knowledge and skills for making intelligent decisions; that liberal education for potential leaders should be open to the best qualified without regard to wealth or social station; and that everything about the school should be geared to produce free men worthy of the blessings of a free society.



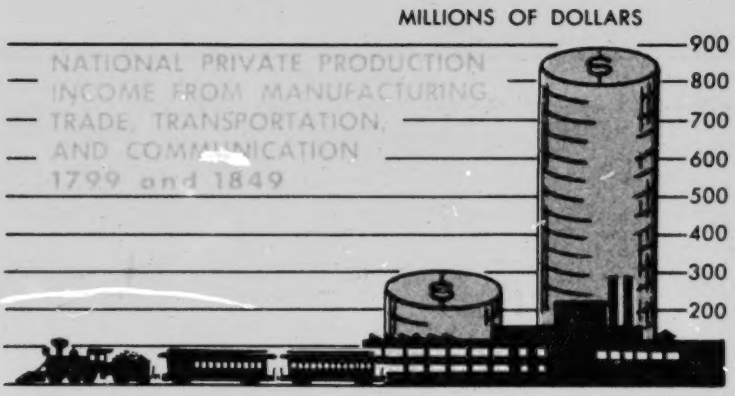
Library of Congress

While it is difficult to estimate the immediate influences of these educational plans, it is clear that they embraced ideas which were coming to command more and more attention. None of the plans was put into effect for several decades, however, and no school system soon appeared incorporating the ideals they advanced. The slowness of the young nation to realize its finest dreams in the field of education paralleled the halting tempo of democratic advance. During the first few decades of independence the principles of the great *Declaration* fell far short of full realization. In 1789 only a small percentage of the people could vote and there was a marked gulf between social classes. While the beginnings of self-government were clearly in evidence, government itself was carried on largely by the representatives of a benevolent aristocracy. Fifty years later vast changes had come to pass. By the middle of the nineteenth century a system of universal public education with its roots in the prophetic ideas of the 1790's was well on the way toward realization.

How the Ideal of the Common Public School Was Developed

What were some of these great changes in American life which led more and more Americans to demand a program of universal public education? Four seem to stand out above all others: first, the extension of the suffrage as well as eligibility for public office; second, the steady growth of commerce and industry; third, the sharp rise in immigration; and fourth, the expansion of the frontier.

When the *Declaration of Independence* was proclaimed, self-government was an ideal. When George Washington first took office as president, only one free man in seven was eligible to vote. The extension of the franchise came rapidly in succeeding decades. Frontier states joined the Union with constitutional provisions for more nearly universal suffrage. Older states modified traditional barriers to voting. Along with this, the idea gradually grew that all citizens—not just a chosen few—were eligible for public office. The democratic ideal of shared rights and shared responsibilities began more and more to be realized. With it came the growing conviction that if such a political system were to endure, both the electorate and their chosen leaders must be educated to these tasks.



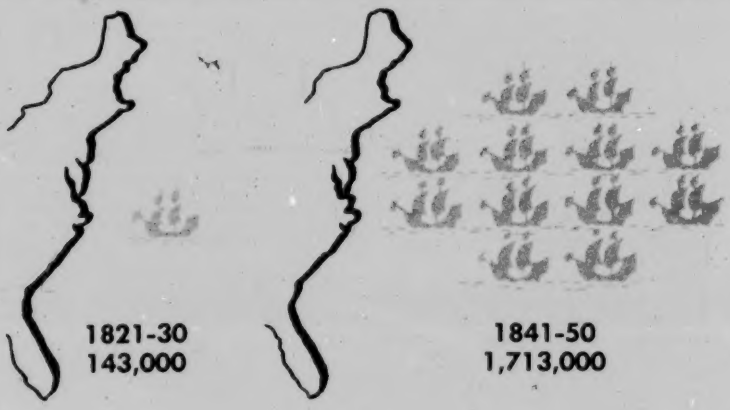
Another influence on education after the Revolution was the rise of commerce and industry. As jobs in trade and manufacture became increasingly complicated, the demand for skilled workers grew. More and more, businessmen realized that employees who could read, write, and compute were essential in offices and factories. Some people began to be concerned with the possibility that wide social-class differences might grow out of business activity. Committed to the American doctrine that "all men are created equal," and seeing the spirit of equality as a foundation of good government, they wondered how they could advance its cause without trespassing on liberty of enterprise. They found their answer in a system of universal education which would act for the society as a gateway of equal opportunity—a school system in which children of all classes would together have the same chance for the knowledge, training, and skills necessary to economic and social advancement.

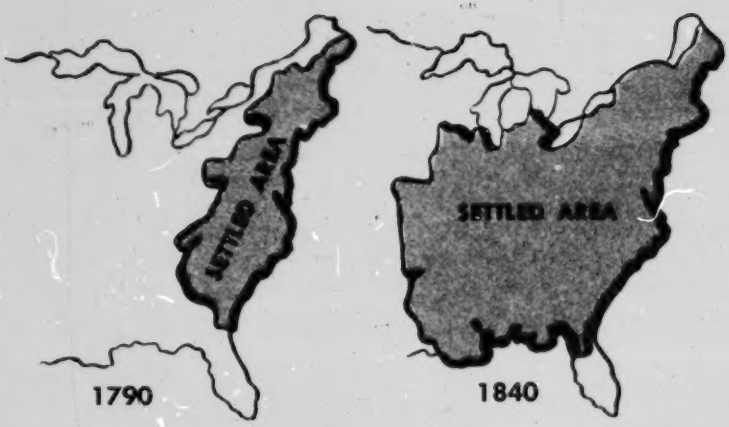
Another profound educational problem was posed by the flood of immigrants who came to America. They came from widely different cultures, spoke different languages, and were accustomed to different political, economic, and social institutions. Coming to the New World to find a better way of life, this migrant stream poured into the United States on a scale un-

precedented in history. Could such divergent groups be welded into a single people? Many Americans began to look to schools as agencies to work out positive answers to such basic questions as these.

The push westward across the continent also had influence on the ideal of public education. Frontier settlers, facing hardships but building for a future in which democracy and individual worth rated high, took initiative in erecting schools. They saw in equal educational opportunity a powerful weapon against aristocracy and privilege. Out of the influence of the frontier came strong support for the dream of American education.

In response to these and other forces, leading citizens in every state began to press for educational facilities which could bear these new responsibilities. Their names are well known in the annals of American history—Horace Mann in Massachusetts, Henry Barnard in Connecticut, Calvin Wiley in North Carolina, Caleb Mills in Indiana, Samuel Lewis in Ohio, John Swett in California, and a host of others. This group of stalwart Americans spoke for education, pamphleteered, organized, and lobbied for schools. As they studied educational needs and possibilities, and discussed them with neighbors and widening circles of citizens, their ideas crystallized. Out of the movement they





led came a central idea in the American heritage—the idea of a *common* or *public* school.

Fundamentally, this new ideal had three parts: First, in order that an intelligent electorate might guide the fortunes of the Republic, there would have to be a basic education for the whole citizenry; second, to ensure a continuing supply of well-prepared leaders selected solely on the basis of merit, there would have to be equality of access to further education; and third, to provide competent instructors for these American schools, there would have to be adequate teacher-education facilities. All three dimensions were to be fitted together into a system that would seek at every turn to advance and strengthen American ideals.

How Public Elementary Schools Would Build an Educated Citizenry

The most distinctive character of the American elementary school lay in the fact it was to be a common school, not common in the traditional European sense of a school for the common—or ordinary—people, but common in a new sense of common to all the people. "The Common School," declared the Episcopal bishop of New Jersey to that state's citizens in 1838, "is *common*, not as inferior, not as a school for poor men's children,

but as the light and air are common." It was to be a school for rich and poor alike, free to all who attended it, and of quality equivalent to private institutions. Unless the common school was as good as private schools, it would soon be labeled a "pauper's school" and hence unsuited to the purposes of a proud and independent citizenry.

It is important to realize how strongly positive was this idea of "common schooling" in the minds of these early leaders. Assuming that association of children would engender mutual respect and friendship, these men hoped that the common school would not only be *open* to all, but eventually voluntarily *used* by all. The children of many nationalities, religions, and economic levels would then have an opportunity to mix together in the same schoolroom. It was argued that after such warm association in childhood, different groups in the community would have common memories, values, and respect on which to build a harmonious national society.

In 1832, the *New England Magazine* praised the common-school ideal by saying:

> There the rich and the poor should meet together; there their children should join—the rich man's son to learn that it is by a rough contest with the rougher members of society, that he is to work his way through life; and the poor man's son to catch some of the embellishments of higher stations and more polished minds.

Four years later, Samuel Lewis, subsequently to distinguish himself as first superintendent of common schools in Ohio, wrote:

> Take fifty lads in a neighborhood, including rich and poor—send them in childhood to the same school—let them join in the same sports, read and spell in the same classes, until their different circumstances fix their business for life: some go to the field, some to the mechanic's shop, some to merchandize: one becomes eminent at the bar, another in the pulpit: some become wealthy; the majority live on with a mere competency—a few are reduced to beggary! But let the most eloquent orator, that ever mounted a western stump, attempt to prejudice the minds of one part against the other—and so far from succeeding, the poorest of the whole would consider himself insulted.

New York City Public Schools

Given this ideal of a school common to all, what would be the role of private schools? Many of the supporters of public education gave important attention to this problem. Some pointed out that in taking the more well-to-do children from the common school, private schools tended to weaken the intermingling association in public schools. Others argued that the private schools attracted money which might otherwise have flowed into public schools. Still others pointed to the loss of interest in public schools among wealthy parents whose children did not attend them. Yet, the proponents of public education seemed agreed that private schools had every right to exist. The resolution of their apparent dilemma seemed to lie at the point of quality; if the public schools were made good enough, they argued, most parents would not avail themselves of private schools. It was felt that in the competitive market, the common-school idea would eventually triumph.

If a truly common school could be built, what would it teach?

Generally—although there were almost as many answers as there were people—those who thought about the problem tended to agree on at least three things that the school would have to provide: *first*, basic training in the ordinary skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic for everyday use; *second*, education for intelligent and loyal citizenship, so that self-government would be enlightened; and *third*, moral education so that knowledge would serve good and not evil.

When the problem of a proper moral education was raised, controversy ensued. There were literally scores of different sects in almost every state. How could morality be inculcated through any one sectarian creed in a common school attended by children of many different religious faiths? How could sectarian religious views be taught in a school that was to be truly a public institution? In the beginning the problem seemed insurmountable. Gradually it was found that the broad elements from the various creeds on which all agreed could be taught in school, leaving doctrinal education to home and church. The great ethical concepts of Judeo-Christian morality could be taught without reference to particular sectarian religious interpretations. The moral foundation of the school program could be preserved while the rights of individual conscience were honored.

Here, then, were the ideals of the common school. How were they to be obtained? Generally, those interested in school development sought the answer in a common—or public—effort of the whole community. The public school was to serve the children of all; why should it not be controlled and supported by all? This meant tax support—a new way to pay for education. For centuries schooling had been thought of as a luxury; if a family could pay for it, they bought it; if not, their children did without it. Now the founders of a democracy argued that schooling was not a luxury, but a public necessity. It benefited the community as a whole and should be paid for by the community as a whole.

It was argued further that, if the people paid for the schools, they had the right to control them, to oversee the education of their children. For centuries select groups of nobles and churchmen had controlled schools; now, in a self-governing republic, representatives of the people would take their place—constantly vigilant to prevent partisan economic, religious, or political interests from destroying the public character of the public school.

Control by the people meant that the public school would be accessible to the people, and quickly responsive to their needs. Thus was laid the foundation of one of the most characteristic features of the American public-school system, local control by lay boards of education legally responsible to the state and ultimately responsible to the people.

How Public High Schools and Universities Would Expand Educational Opportunity

The common elementary school was designed to meet the need for an intelligent American citizenry. How did educational leaders hope to meet the concomitant need for a wise and informed leadership? Their answer was framed largely in terms of two kinds of institutions specifically designed to make real the ideal of equal educational opportunity: first, free public high schools which would serve not only students preparing for college but also those desiring a more practical kind of secondary education for life; and second, public universities which would supplement the rapidly expanding work of private colleges.

The idea of the public university supported by a state dates clearly back to the period of the Founding Fathers. As early as 1785, the University of Georgia was chartered as a degree-conferring institution under state control. North Carolina established a similar institution in 1789, following a directive in the state constitution of 1776 that "all useful learning shall be duly

encouraged and promoted in one or more universities." Nevertheless it was after 1800, particularly as more and more frontier states joined the Union, that the state university came to the fore. The idea grew logically out of the principle of equality. Having educated the whole citizenry in a system designed to reduce class distinctions at every point, it would be folly to limit the opportunity for higher education to a chosen few.

Two great problems which had traditionally limited quality of educational opportunity had to be met: the problem of finance and the problem of program. The financial problem was not difficult to perceive; its solution involved the elimination of tuition fees, or at least their reduction to a point where an enterprising young student could by his own effort muster the necessary funds. The problem of program was far more subtle. Actually, if the only advanced education available was of a limited kind that would be useful to only a small number of people, the opportunity to pursue such an education would be largely meaningless. Only as colleges and universities provided the advanced instruction needed by persons widely varied in interest and talent would educational opportunity be real and valued. Thus, solution of the problem of program turned principally on an expanded offering closely related to the needs of the people.

In providing these solutions the state university made rapid progress in the years before 1860. To be sure, the concept of *availability* rather than of *universality* characterized this level of public education; and to this extent the distinction from private higher education was neither so sharp nor so significant as was the public-private distinction at the elementary level. Nonetheless, like the common schools of the system which it capped, the state university was conceived as an instrument of the public. The people would support it and, through duly elected or appointed representatives, the people would control it. Like the common schools, it would serve the people—not in

catering to popular whim, but in preparing leaders for every worthy sphere of intellectual, social, and professional activity. Finally, like the common schools, the public university would be responsible to all of the people, never to any single political, economic, or religious group.

Once the ideal of the state university is understood, the ideal of the public high school can be placed in perspective; for the high school in the United States has been a unique synthesis of two functions which in other countries have almost universally been separated. One function derives from the need for specific preparatory work on the part of those going to college. In a sense, one may think of this work as a downward extension of the college; and the students who pursue it are for the most part planning to continue their formal education. The other function derives from a need which was first given systematic statement in America by Benjamin Franklin in 1749: the need for some kind of secondary education appropriate for young people who had completed their elementary schooling and wanted further preparation in the practical business of living. One may well think of this work as an upward extension of the common school; and the students who pursue it are largely those who will not go on to further schooling. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, in response to a number of proposals like Franklin's, a new kind of secondary school—the private academy—began to specialize in this type of program. It made rapid headway throughout the country, particularly in the older, more settled regions.

> No other people ever demanded so much of education as have the American. None other was ever served so well by its schools and educators.
>
> —**Henry Steele Commager**, in *Life*, 16 October 1950

When the proponents of public education came onto the scene, the academy was already rapidly displacing the Latin grammar school as the chief form of secondary education. Although a few academies had begun to offer college-preparatory as well as terminal courses, the earlier differences between academic and grammar schools tended to prevail. The possibility clearly existed that the New World would follow the Old not only in caring for college-preparatory and noncollege-preparatory students in two different kinds of school, but also in denying large segments of the population access to a secondary schooling by charging tuition. Possibly the most significant contribution of the public-high-school ideal was to bring the two functions together into a single publicly supported and publicly controlled institution. Thus, the common-school system became a ladder on which an enterprising youth could start from the elementary school and climb as far as his talents permitted.

If the public high school were to serve students who would not go beyond high school and also students seeking either classical or nonclassical preparation for college, it would have to diversify its program. The high schools could invite students who did not expect to go on to college; but if only Latin, Greek, and mathematics were offered few such students would come. What this new Herculean commitment meant was that high schools would have to embrace, in addition to the traditional college-preparatory studies, the whole range of more practical subjects in which the academy had pioneered. Moreover, they would have to be ready to expand their offering further as new needs became evident. Finally, their program would have to be taught at least as well if not better than that of the academies, or the danger of a dual system—public for the poor, and private for those who could afford better—would persist. Thus did the American people charge their high schools with the weighty task of giving life to the great ideal of equal educational opportunity for the varied children of a heterogeneous people.

How Good Teachers Would Be Provided for Good Schools

Having thus conceived a new ideal which through universal schooling would develop an educated citizenry and through equal educational opportunity would develop a wise, informed, and classless leadership, the inescapable question arose: Where would the teachers come from? It was in the effort to answer this question that the final dimension of the early public-school ideal gradually took form—the idea of public facilities for the preparation of a competent teaching profession.

Probably the chief characteristic of the preparation of colonial teachers was variety. Some could hardly read and write; others had completed the work for a master's degree. As a rule, the teachers of the best grammar schools and some of the new academies had received their preparation in one of the American colleges or even in the universities of England and Scotland. Other secondary-school teachers could boast one or two years at college, or perhaps only a grammar-school education. The education of most elementary-school teachers was limited to the secondary school or even bare completion of the elementary course itself.

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, a number of reports began to circulate in the United States enthusiastically describing Prussian and French experiments with a new kind of teacher-preparing institution called the normal school. By means of these secondary schools, both Prussia and France were seeking to meet the increasing demand for trained teachers to staff their newly developing national systems of primary education. American educational leaders realized that, as progress was made toward achieving the ideal of universal education, the demand for trained teachers would soon outrun the supply. Moreover, they believed that if public schools were to meet their responsibilities to the children of *all* the people, public-

school teachers would need a special kind of training—one which would not only enable them to impart information but would also equip them to study the students who came to them and devise effective ways of dealing with their differing educational potentialities.

In an effort to meet these demands for many teachers and for special training the idea of public normal schools began to make headway. The chief function of these normal schools was generally regarded as the preparation of qualified elementary school teachers. The argument for them ran something as follows: The public has undertaken the task of building a universal public-school system; this system must provide the finest education obtainable; the most significant determinant of educational quality is the teacher; existing institutions alone cannot possibly prepare the large number of teachers needed; therefore, teacher education, as one dimension of the public-school system, should be a public responsibility.

The Dream of Universal Public Education

Here, was the educational ideal that began to take form in the minds of early nineteenth-century leaders. Seeking to support and advance the principles of freedom, equality, and self-government, they dreamed the then revolutionary dream of universal public education. They dreamed of public elementary schools—called common schools—which would give the whole citizenry a fundamental education, of public high schools and universities to insure a continuing supply of well-prepared leaders and specialists, and of public teacher education to guarantee the quality of teachers and, therefore, of schools. To understand the broad scope of their dream and to grasp its tremendous vision is to realize the profound influence the public school has exerted since it became part of the life of America. The gradual—and even yet imperfect—realization of this dream is the theme to which the following pages now turn.

CHAPTER 3

Toward a Universal Common School

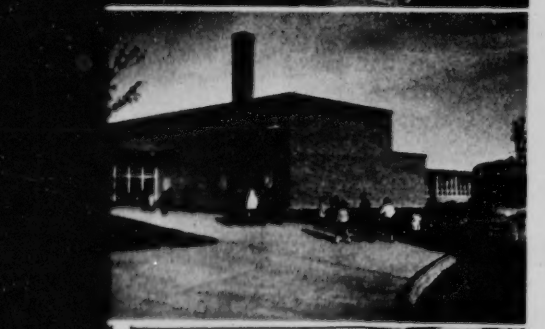
1837
1796 HORACE MANN 185
FATHER OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

THE nineteenth-century Americans who developed the ideal of universal education were men of affairs—state governors, legislators, clergymen, labor leaders, lawyers. They sought to build the new educational system on a firm foundation; and believing that intelligent self-government rests ultimately on the wisdom of the people at large, they conceived of this foundation as the elementary education of the whole citizenry. It is at the elementary level, then, that the first great effort was made toward realizing the dream of an American public-school system.

How Americans Established Their Common Schools

Few Americans who today enjoy the benefits of public education are aware of the arguments, struggles, and tremendous personal sacrifices that went into the battle to obtain public schools. The chapter in American history which relates these struggles and sacrifices gives proof that public schools would never have come to be had it not been the clear decision of the American people to build them.

At the beginning there was sharp opposition to the general



idea of public education. A few people thought that the education of the whole people was a fantastic idea that would upset all social order and stability. Others argued that to tax for education was "highway robbery." Still others, who were not opposed to education in general, were sharply opposed to the particular idea of a common school. Some persons were against letting the children of different social classes mingle in the same classroom. Others attacked the idea of educating together children of differing religious faiths. Still others drew the distinction with respect to race or color. All these people resisted the effort to establish public schools. It was only as an ever larger number of citizens awakened to the value of public education and became active in its support that the idea of the American common school began to be realized.

Today, with well-established and widely supported public schools, it is easy to forget the intensity of the initial efforts to obtain them. In each state—for education was left to the states by the Constitution—friends of the public school had to fight patiently

Picture credits (top to bottom): Memphis Public Schools; Lane County (Oregon) Public Schools; U. S. Office of Education; North Syracuse (New York) Public Schools—Photo by Norris Studio; Kahului, Maui (Hawaii) Public Schools.

for their cause. They spoke, lobbied, pamphleteered, wrote letters, and organized their fellow enthusiasts. It was a demanding political struggle which involved the efforts of thousands of men and women.

Out of these efforts came results. Here and there, state legislatures began to pass laws permitting local communities to tax for public schools. Then in quick sequence a group of states provided for compulsory school taxation. By 1860 a trend was becoming discernible—and it was very much in favor of the public school.

One might tell the story strictly in terms of school laws; but the story is much more than that. It is a story of the American citizenry slowly but surely working out and supporting the common-school idea. As the frontier moved westward, settlers built communities, and as part of their communities, they built public schools. Laws can be distant and impersonal, but the small log or frame schoolhouses that educated earlier generations of Americans were very close and very personal indeed. Often, early schoolhouses were literally built by the men whose sons and daughters were to use them. They were not built because a legislature several hundred miles away "required" them. They were built because the people who built them, paid for them, supervised them, and sent their children to them had faith in a dream—the dream of democratic institutions undergirded by universal education.

The War Between the States slowed educational progress, especially in the South. Nevertheless, all of the Southern states which had failed to establish free public schools before the conflict did so within twenty years after its conclusion. They did so according to a pattern which provided separate public schools for the Caucasian and Negro races. While segregated schools were by no means confined to the South, and while they did much to provide expanding educational opportunity where little had existed before, they were attacked from the beginning

by a growing number of citizens who viewed them as contrary to the historic principle of equality.

By 1890, every state in the Union had provided legally for common schools, and the idea of free public education was universally triumphant. To be sure, skirmishes were being fought. While the period witnessed the active work of hundreds of citizen groups on behalf of public schools, it also saw the occasional efforts of organizations seeking the outright abolition of public schools. Nevertheless, those who favored public education had won an impressive victory; and states had only to perfect the systems they had established.

Another step in the establishment of universal education began in 1852, when Massachusetts passed the first law compelling the attendance of all children at school for a given period of time. It was an easy and logical transition from the argument that enlightened self-government must be founded on an informed citizenry to the argument that uninformed citizens were a danger to the commonwealth; hence, the necessity of compelling all parents to give their children some schooling. The law did not compel attendance at public schools, but since the public schools were by far the most numerous most children attended them. State after state followed the lead of Massachusetts during the next half-century and with the passage of a compulsory attendance law by Mississippi in 1918, the practice became universal. By then the die seemed cast: Public education was everywhere available; compulsory attendance was everywhere the rule. The dream of early leaders had not proved an idle or fleeting wish; it seemed well on its way toward realization.

You teachers . . . render to this republic the prime, the vital service of amalgamating into one homogeneous body the children of those who are born here and of those who come here from so many different lands abroad. . . . It is in no small degree due to you, and to your efforts, that we of this great American republic form one people instead of a group of jarring peoples.

—**Theodore Roosevelt**, in addressing the annual meeting of the National Education Association, Ocean Grove, N. J., 7 July 1905

How the Oregon Decision Affected the Common School Ideal

Shortly after World War I a controversy occurred in Oregon which influenced profoundly the movement toward the common-school ideal. Oregon in 1922 passed legislation requiring all children between 8 and 16 years of age—with certain few exceptions—to attend the public schools. Some thought the law simply carried the historic common-school ideal to fulfillment; others, however, saw the law as an unwarranted trespass on the right of parents to direct the education of their children. To test the constitutionality of the legislation, a Roman Catholic parochial school and a non-sectarian private military academy petitioned the Federal Court for an injunction restraining state authorities from enforcing the law. The case came before the United States Supreme Court; and that tribunal in 1925 ruled the law unconstitutional. While the Court raised no question concerning the state's right to supervise and inspect all schools, it maintained that the Oregon statute would destroy the property of the petitioners without just cause and would deny parents the right to educate their children in schools of their own choosing.

The meaning of this momentous decision for education has been a subject of debate almost from the moment it was handed down. There seems little doubt but that most citizens and educators took it to mean that the vast majority of American children would continue to attend public schools—as was then the case—but that the way would always be open for those who so desired to attend private institutions. On the other hand, the decision has been followed by a substantial expansion of private —particularly church-related—school facilities. In 1950, 99 per cent of all American youth of school age were enrolled in elementary schools with 88 per cent of these enrolled in public schools. Whether that ratio would continue had become a matter of speculation. At heart, the question remained much the same as that posed by early educational leaders: whether the

common-school ideal would continue to command the support of most American citizens. On the outcome would depend much that for more than a century had been at the heart of the American way of life.

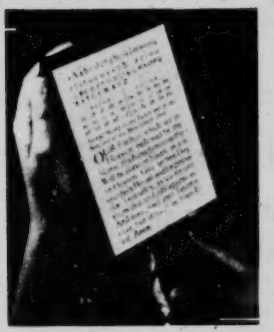
How Public Elementary Schools Have Served American Children and the American People

What was the character of these public elementary schools that Americans built for the education of their children? It is amazing how close they came to the early nineteenth-century dream. They were available to all and were attended by children of all classes, religions, and ethnic backgrounds. In most states children of different races went to school together. These schools were supported by taxation—principally local taxation. They were publicly controlled, responsible directly to a local board representing the local community that supported and used them.

New York Public Library

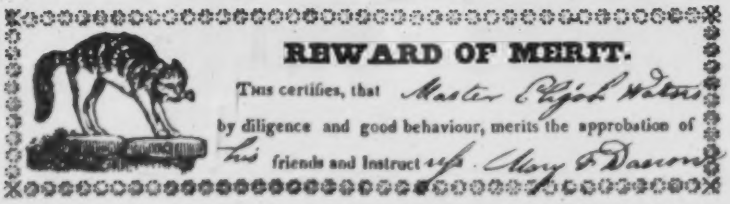
NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

In their program the common schools surpassed even the fondest expectations of the early nineteenth century. At the time they were first proposed, the elementary program was a crude and narrow affair. There were so few children in each school that all would usually meet in the same room with a single teacher. There they would study reading, writing, some arithmetic, and what was called moral and religious instruction—sometimes involving direct sectarian instruction, but usually



Scholastic Magazines

HORNBOOK

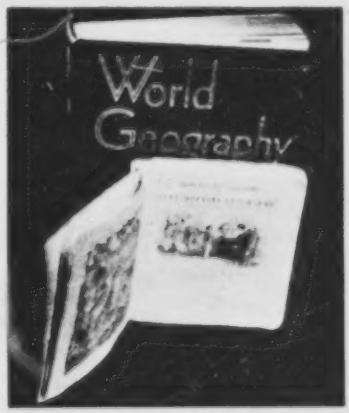

REWARD OF MERIT.
This certifies, that Master Elijah Wales
by diligence and good behaviour, merits the approbation of
his friends and Instructress Mary P. Dawson

ABOUT 1820

Deerfield Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts, and The Macmillan Company

consisting of Bible reading, the singing of hymns, and the reciting of psalms. School terms were short; and, since children were needed for work at home, school attendance was usually irregular.

With the establishment of state public-school systems, this limited program began to expand in line with the common-school ideal. Reading, writing, and arithmetic remained; spelling and grammar were added. To teach children about their country and their heritage, geography and history were added. To achieve the possibilities of moral education, sectarian instruction was omitted; but Bible-reading (without comment, to avoid sectarian explanations) remained, and a growing body of special literature for children gave particular emphasis to time-honored ethical and human values. Then, too, as the number of children attending school increased, the organization into grades was developed. This plan permitted more careful organization of work and attention to the particular problems of various age groups.



Scholastic Magazines

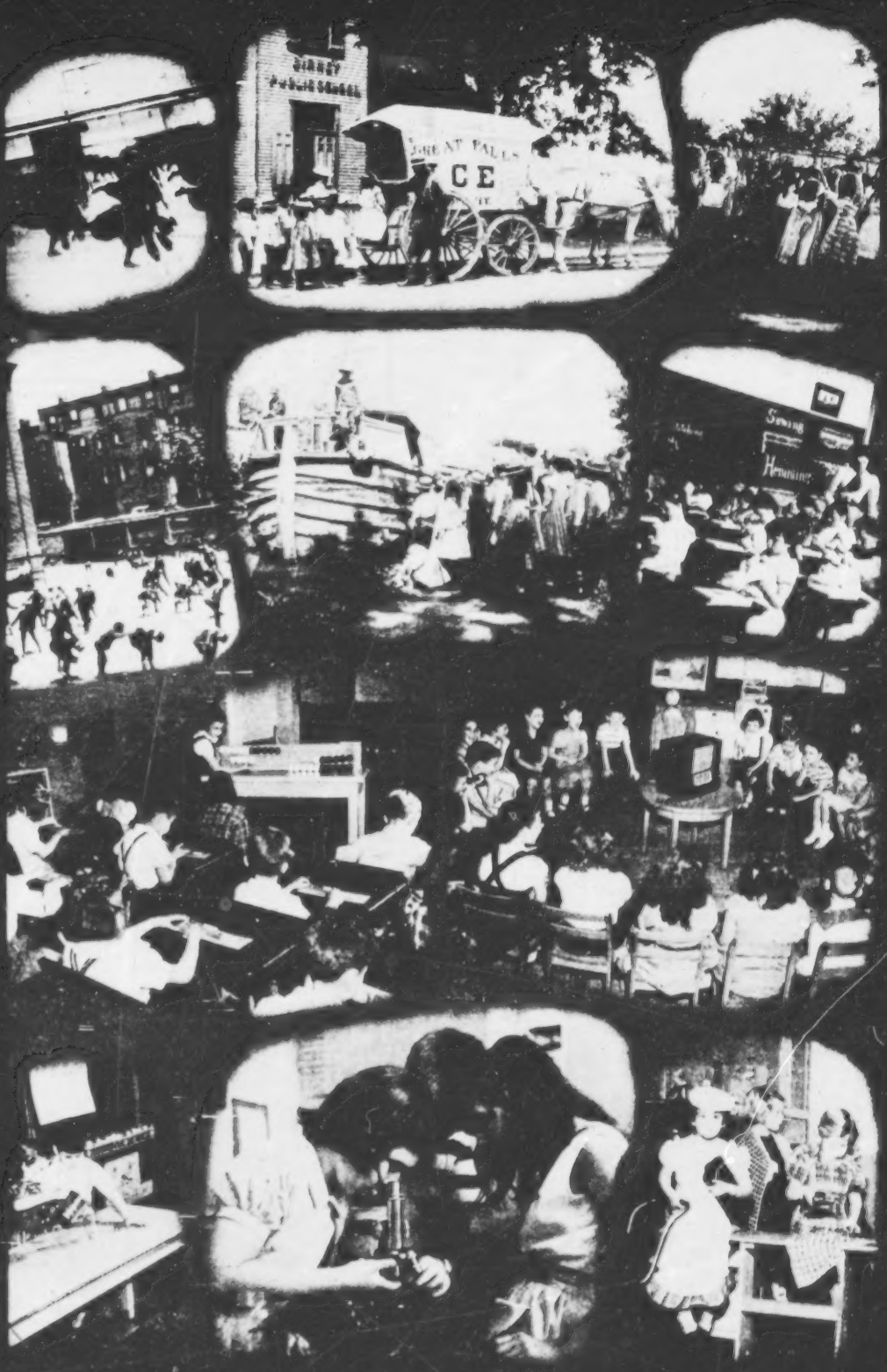
By the beginning of the twentieth century two new developments served significantly to improve even this offering. One was the growing body of scientific facts about children

and how they learn; the other was the continued effort to make the public school really serve *all* children.

The first development began to tell teachers a number of critically important things about their work. Rigorous experiments tested the claims of time-honored methods and theories of learning, and significant advances began to be made in the efficiency of teaching reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and other elementary skills and subjects. All sorts of data began to be collected that told teachers more about the children they taught: that children of the same age differed vastly in their intellectual, emotional, and physical development and that all three factors—intellectual, emotional, and physical—were important in learning. Teachers began to discover that they had to concern themselves with children as individuals if they wished to teach effectively and to help individuals become active and responsible citizens in American society.

Given these principles, the second development—the effort to make the school serve *all* children—is particularly significant. Children widely varied as to abilities were now coming into the schools and expecting education appropriate to their abilities. Many children would have dropped out under the older, more limited curriculum because of lack of interest or ability. As society placed upon the common school the responsibility for educating all its children, the curriculum had to become broader. The common school received a continuing flow of pupils who in other times and other places would have been denied an education. For these people, the school was now giving meaning to the historic American right to "pursuit of happiness." For society, the school was conserving new and needed talent whose benefit would serve the common good.

Picture credits (left to right, top to bottom): Scholastic Magazines; next five, Washington, D. C., Public Schools and Library of Congress; next three, New York City Public Schools; University of Pittsburgh; New York Public Schools.


GREAT FALLS
CE
Sewing
Hemming

With a growing concern for individual children a vast variety of new emphases came into the program of the common school after 1900. To *educate healthy, active* children who would in their maturity be intelligent, self-supporting citizens, the schools added work in hygiene, in the arts, in civics, and in physical education. Realizing the great differences in children, many schools included special work to challenge the gifted as well as special work to help the intellectually or physically handicapped. Realizing that children must be socially and emotionally healthy if they are to learn effectively, many schools added supervised play activities and gave special attention to guidance and counseling. Realizing that if children are to live peacefully with their neighbors they have to learn how to do it, schools organized activities specifically designed to teach the skills of cooperation and neighborliness. Thus, the original idea of the common school was further extended; not only would all kinds of children go to school together but they would also learn better the difficult art of getting along together.

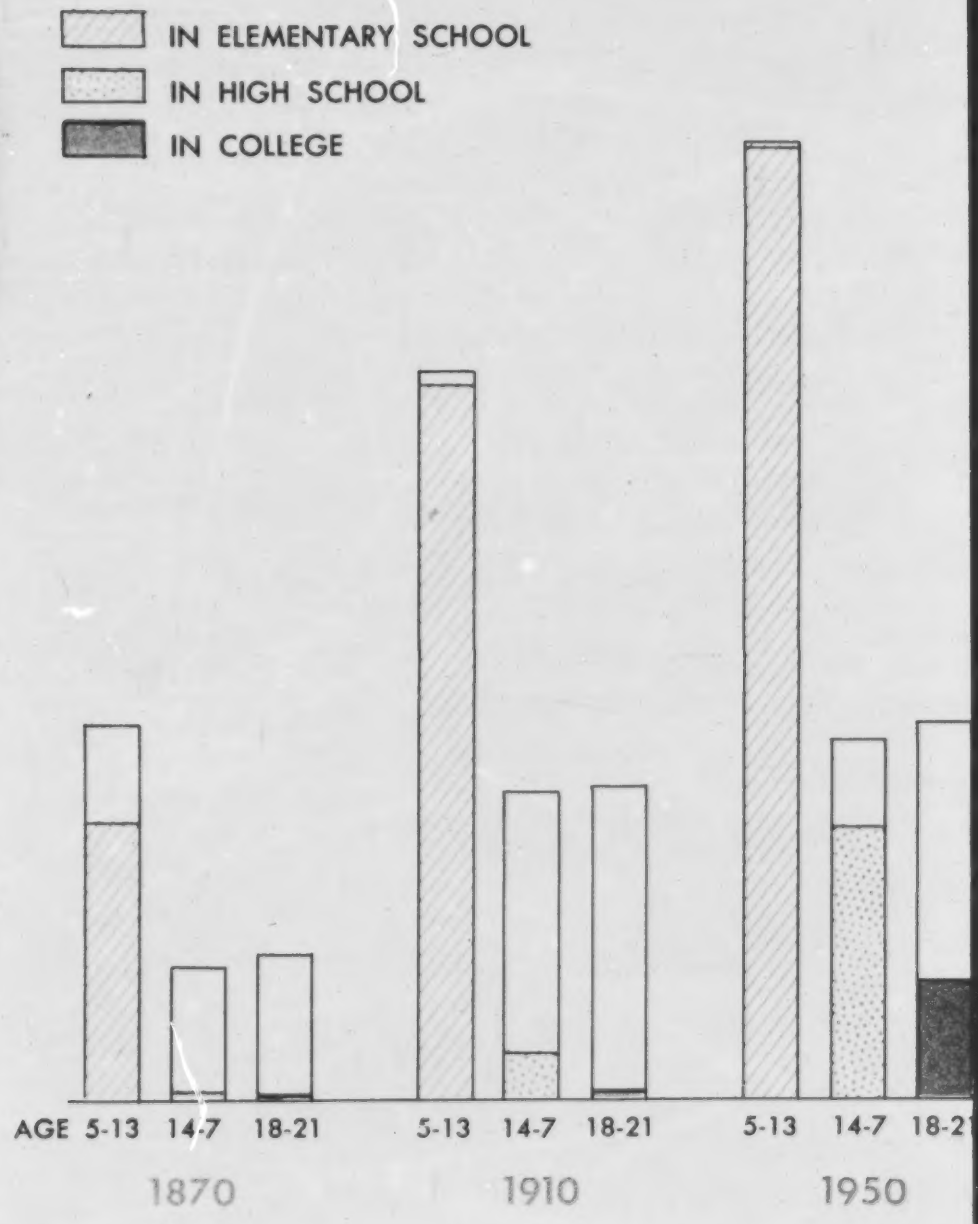
In all of these developments the American people set the goals and outlined the policies. Educators, learning more and more about children and about school procedures, served as counselors to society. School, home, church, and community were all involved in close cooperation. Yet, as years went by, the public schools often came to be accepted too easily. In some places and for some periods, the public became complacent about education. Educational achievements were on occasion taken for granted. Little wonder, then, that today's active citizen interest in education seems by contrast more spirited. Against a background of public-school history, such interest can rightly be seen as the exercise with renewed vigor of a century-old prerogative of the American citizenry—the careful examination and control of the nation's public schools.

CHAPTER 4

Toward Equality of Educational Opportunity

U. S. POPULATION AGE 5-22

INCREASING PORTIONS OF EACH OF THREE AGE GROUPS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES



THE Americans who built the system of public elementary schools viewed them as first steps in a larger program. To round out this program, opportunity for secondary and higher education was imperative. Before 1860, efforts in this direction were largely beginnings: the beginnings of state universities, which were later to become great and important centers of learning, and the beginnings of public secondary schools, which would some day send millions of young Americans to these universities as well as to careers in commerce, agriculture, industry, and homemaking.

How the Establishment of Public Secondary Schools and Higher Institutions Increased Educational Opportunity

The establishment of the first public universities and secondary schools required as much struggle as had the establishment of public elementary schools. Every argument against public education in general was made against efforts to create public secondary and higher institutions. Groups which had argued that legislatures had no right to tax the public for elementary schools again voiced conviction that they certainly had no right

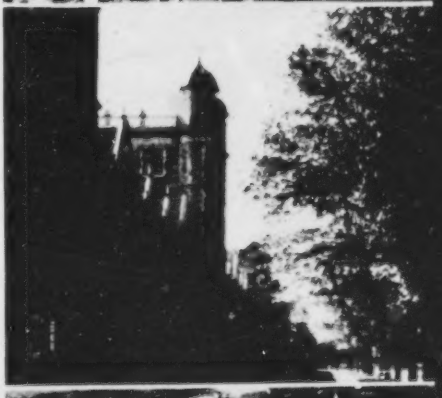
to tax for high schools and colleges. Some people believed that to allow "lower-class" youngsters free access to high school and college would create worthless malcontents and idlers. Charges of "atheism" and "socialism" were leveled against proposed high schools and universities. Because secondary and higher education had for centuries been confined to the rich, many thought that they would continue to be; thus, they asked why poor men should be taxed to support rich-men's colleges.

In the face of such opposition, it took heated political battles in the several states for the state-university idea to win acceptance. Interestingly enough, a federal Supreme Court decision in 1819 did much to stimulate the movement. Higher education had begun in the colonies with the founding of Harvard in 1636; and the remainder of the colonial period had seen the establishment of eight other institutions of a similar sort: William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth. All of these colleges had maintained more or less close relations with their respective colonial governments, operating as quasi-public institutions under charters granting them independent corpor-

Picture credits (top to bottom): Library of Congress and Harvard University; Library of Congress and Yale University; University of Colorado; University of Minnesota.

ate status. Moreover, all of them had also maintained connections with one or another of the Protestant denominations, reflecting the close bond between the intellectual and the religious that characterized the colonial period. In the early national period of our history the state legislatures had sought for various political and religious reasons to strengthen their authority over these colleges. When New Hampshire tried to transform Dartmouth into a state university, the issue came before the United States Supreme Court. In the far-reaching Dartmouth College decision, that tribunal declared Dartmouth's charter an inviolable contract.

The decision had two important effects on American higher education. First, and perhaps the more immediate, it encouraged many groups to found private colleges for sectarian or other purposes in the knowledge that their institutions would be protected from legislative encroachment. Second, the decision led educational leaders seeking to enlarge popular opportunity for higher education to establish new publicly supported and publicly controlled institutions of higher learning. Not a little help was given to the latter cause in the form of huge federal grants-in-aid. Federal authorities, unable to participate directly



Picture credits (top to bottom): University of Georgia; University of California, Berkeley; University of Michigan; University of Connecticut.

in the business of education, were able financially to encourage state authorities to do so. Thus, when many of the western states joined the Union, their constitutions provided for the establishment of public state universities. Even before 1860 a majority of the states had founded such institutions. All these efforts were pushed even further forward in 1862, when Congress appropriated vast tracts of public land to be distributed among the states for public colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts.

The foundations of the public high school were also laid during the years before 1860. There had been public secondary schools from the very earliest days in some of the New England states, but these had been strictly college-preparatory institutions. Then, as has been pointed out, the academy developed rapidly after 1750 as a new kind of secondary school designed to serve some of the more practical needs of American youth. Almost all of the new academies, however, were private. Therefore, the effort to realize the common-school ideal on the secondary level became the effort to make both kinds of secondary schooling—the college-preparatory and the more practical—available on an equal basis to all qualified people.

Picture credits (top to bottom): St. Louis Public Schools; Charlotte (North Carolina) Public Schools; Denver Public Schools; Santa Fe (New Mexico) Public Schools; Chicago Public Schools.

The first such public high school was established in Boston in 1821, its specific purpose being to give more practical education to competent young graduates of Boston's common schools. Other communities soon followed suit. Although some set up one school for college-preparatory education and another for more practical education, many more found it advantageous to offer both in the same school. Thus did the American pattern quickly move toward a *comprehensive* secondary school embracing many different goals and purposes.

How Equal Opportunity for Secondary and Higher Education Has Expanded Greatly During the Past Century

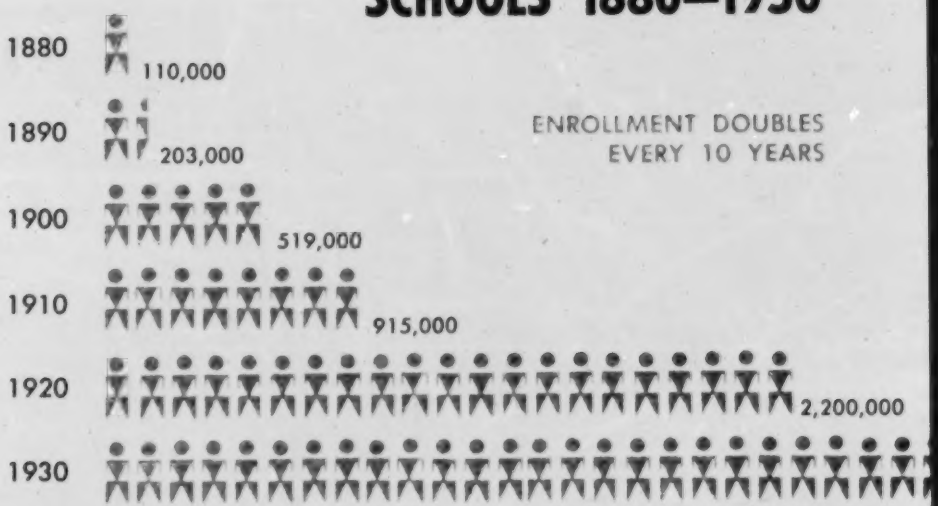
These foundations were laid before 1860, but it was in the decades after 1860 that conditions most encouraged expansion of public secondary and higher education. American life was becoming more complex because of its industrialization. Skilled workers were in demand, and the public schools were called upon to help train them. The era of rapid territorial expansion, with opportunity for cheap land and a new start, was rapidly drawing to a close. In increasing measure opportunity for youth now lay, via free public schools, in industry, commerce, and the professions. Finally, the mere fact that the common schools were graduating more young people every year provided a reservoir of young people interested in and available for further education. Americans were becoming more concerned with the ideals of equality and democracy, and equality of educational opportunity was seen as an important goal in these ideals.

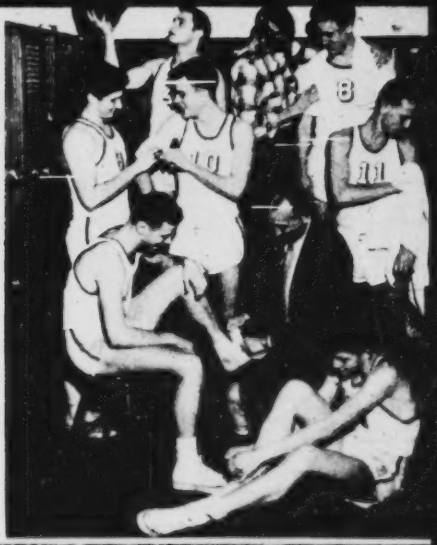
In response to these conditions, efforts were made in every state to obtain free public high schools. In a number of states prolonged court battles had to be fought. A decision of the Michigan State Supreme Court in 1874 proclaiming the right

of any local community to provide advanced secondary schooling of all kinds for its young people is usually considered the climax of the great legal battle. During the next decade, a number of state legislatures passed laws authorizing local school districts to establish free public high schools.

By 1890 American secondary education moved into a period of revolutionary growth. Almost unbelievably, secondary-school enrollments doubled every ten years between 1880 and 1930. By the end of the 1920's educational leaders were preparing for something that fifty years before would have been unbelievable: the secondary education of *all* American youth. Prohibited by the depression from finding work, hundreds of thousands of young men and women sought high-school training that would enhance the marketability of their talents. By 1950, of the 6,427,000 young Americans enrolled in secondary schools, 5,731,000 were enrolled in public institutions; and a growing number of educators were talking about "the common school

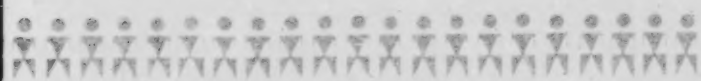
PUPILS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS 1880–1930



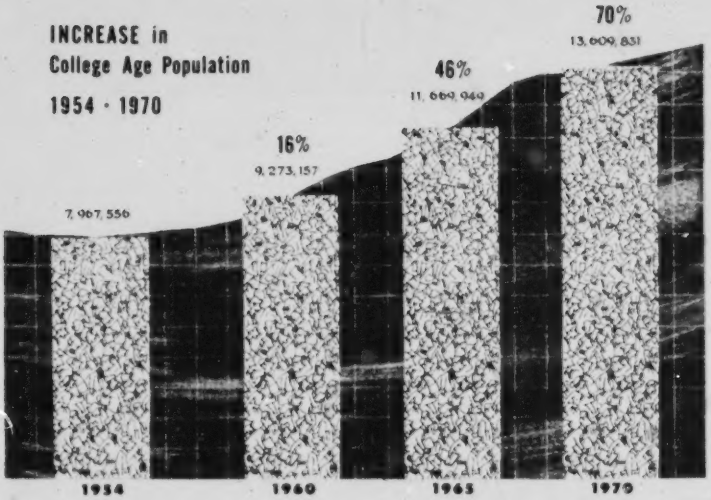


Above, left and right: Quakertown-Tohickon (Pennsylvania) Public Schools
Lower left: Lakewood (Ohio) Public Schools
Lower right: National Association of Student Councils

through the twelfth grade." In the rapid movement toward universality in secondary education coupled with the traditional pattern of a free public comprehensive high school, American leaders found the secondary school moving from *availability* to *commonness*. They saw the time-honored benefits of free common association applying more and more to a twelve-year block of schooling in the life of every American child.



4,399,000



Ronald B. Thompson and American Council on Education

Expectations of increased enrollments in colleges and universities are based on forecasts that the number of college-age youth in the United States will increase markedly in the years ahead.

As one might expect, a growing proportion of the thousands of young men and women who were graduated from the nation's high schools each year sought higher education; and enrollments at that level also rose. The number of students in colleges and universities stood at 157,000 in 1890, at 598,000 in 1920 and at 2,659,000 in 1950. Moreover, an increasing number of higher institutions which had started out as church-related schools gradually gave up their denominational affiliations. In their nondenominational, tax-exempt, nonprofit, and state-chartered status, they became institutions "clothed with the public interest" and as such assumed a role that was quasi-public in character. With the situation thus, the balance between enrollments in public and private facilities at the higher level tended to remain about even. By 1950 the astonishing number of

1,355,000 students were using the facilities of the nation's public colleges and universities, and in view of the high birth-rate of the 1940's the prospect was one of continuing increase. Indeed, some estimates early in 1954 envisaged a total of 4,000,000 Americans enrolled in colleges and universities by the end of the decade.

How Public High Schools Have Served American Youth

To serve the tremendous variety of young people in attendance has been a problem of public high schools from the beginning. Most of the first high schools established in New England offered instruction not only in such traditional college-preparatory subjects as languages, literature, and mathematics, but also offered a wide range of more "practical" studies such as navigation, surveying, debating and bookkeeping courses which would obviously be of use to young men going into industry and commerce. In spite of efforts to achieve balance, however, the dominant emphasis of this early secondary program was college-preparatory. Colleges, through admission requirements and other means, generally had overwhelming influence in the determination of secondary-school policies and programs.

With the steady rise in secondary-school attendance after the War Between the States, the problem became even more complicated. First of all, as more young people came, their demands became even more varied than before. Then, too, as American life became more industrialized, community leaders placed even greater responsibilities on the high school. Both forces increased the number of tasks the public high schools undertook. To meet the needs of business and industry, special public vocational, trade, and commercial high schools were erected. As farming became more and more mechanized and scientific, public agricultural high schools were also begun. Nevertheless, not every community could establish four or five

different high schools; in most American towns and counties high schools were more or less *comprehensive* in character and offered work in vocational, commercial, and agricultural subjects alongside the traditional offering.

Tremendous advances in knowledge—especially scientific knowledge—were being made, so that to prepare students for college, high schools had to enlarge their work in the natural and social sciences. As the number of girls attending public high schools also continued to rise, there were persistent demands for practical work in homemaking and domestic science. In keeping with the effort to prepare these young people to enjoy responsibly the blessings of freedom, equality, and self-government, there were continued demands for better preparation in citizenship. On every side the pressure on the high schools was to offer more work, more varied work, and more advanced work to more students with more varied abilities.

When new insights into how young people learn and come to maturity began to be revealed at the turn of the century, they had much the same impact on secondary schools as on elementary schools. Experiments with different methods began slowly to improve the efficiency of instruction. In every field from Latin to homemaking, new techniques were sought and devised to communicate more effectively the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that young people needed. Schools became more concerned about educating each individual in such a way as to enable him to become a happy, responsible, and productive member of his community. New responsibilities were thrust on public high schools in the form of vocational guidance and health services. As the special problems of young people at different age levels were surveyed, some communities began to reorganize their public-school systems to include three-year junior high schools which would follow six-year elementary schools and precede three-year senior high schools. It was hoped that in junior high schools more attention could be given to the

special needs of young people as they left childhood.

These new currents were best represented in the thinking of educational leaders during World War I. A committee appointed by the National Education Association labored throughout those years to build a new view of the high-school program. The results of their work brought together much of the newer thinking. If the public high school was really to do its job, it would have to view its program in terms of the lives of young people. The educational leaders summed it up under seven "cardinal principles": education for health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocational fitness, effective citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. The public high schools increasingly strove to meet these goals.

Above: New York City Public Schools
Below: San Francisco Public Schools

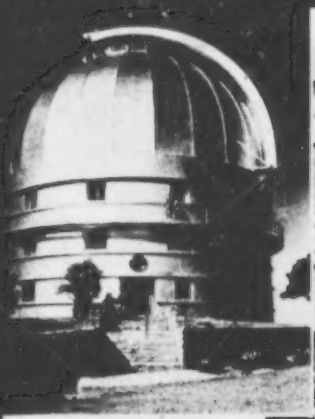
After World War I, many state legislatures began to extend upward the period of compulsory attendance—attesting to their faith in the advantages of more extensive formal education. These actions placed in the public high schools hundreds of thousands of young people who formerly would have gone directly from elementary school to full-time work. Few of them went on to college; some had no desire to be in school in the first place. The school struggled to help them become better workers, better citizens, and better men and women. Indeed, so completely did this effort occupy the attention of high-school

personnel that some thoughtful citizens in the late 1940's and early 1950's began to wonder whether intellectually gifted young people were being neglected. To educate the gifted at the expense of educating the vast majority of American children would deny American principles. Nevertheless, to neglect the gifted would equally deny American principles, and also endanger national welfare by a wastage of talent. How to care for all young people effectively in comprehensive high schools posed serious problems for educators and citizens alike.

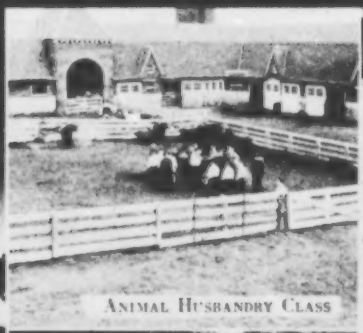
In the effort to meet these challenges, a growing number of citizens and educators began to call for a new synthesis in the secondary-school program. First, they proposed a general education that would utilize the best of the older "intellectualized" approach and the best of the newer "practical" approach in the effort to give all American youth the knowledge, the outlooks, and the skills demanded by a modern industrial democracy. Second, they sought a variety of specialized programs to care for the diverse interests, needs, and capabilities of the heterogeneous high-school population. How the new synthesis would look in practice remained in the early 1950's a matter of controversy. Nevertheless, it was clear that in such needs and proposals lay many of the complexities and problems of secondary education.

How Public Higher Education Has Expanded Its Services

The responsibilities of higher education differ from the problems of elementary and secondary education in at least one fundamental emphasis: while elementary and secondary schools are concerned primarily with truths which are already known —and with the development of habits of intellectual inquiry appropriate for younger students—universities are concerned with research, with pushing back the frontier of knowledge as well as with teaching established truths. For the great state

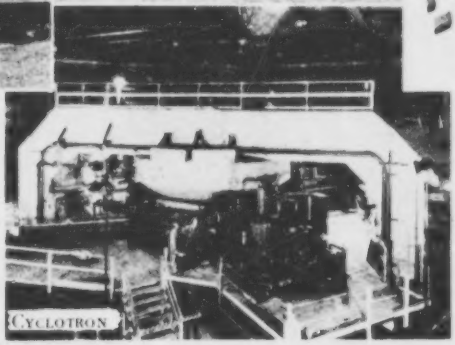


University of Texas and University of Chicago



Upper center: Iowa State College

Long Beach (California) City College



Lower center: University of California, Berkeley

universities truly to serve the American people, therefore, they had to provide not only opportunity for many different kinds of higher and professional education, but also opportunity for research in a wide variety of fields.

Efforts to meet the demands of growing student bodies and to conduct research have characterized American state universities from their earliest days. At a time when college programs tended to limit their offerings to languages, mathematics, and philosophy a committee to determine policy for the new University of Virginia spoke of a curriculum which would "form statesmen, legislators, and judges," "harmonize and promote the interests of agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce," and enlighten youth "with mathematical and physical sciences, which advance the arts, and administer to the health, the subsistence, and the comforts of human life." Seventeen years later, in 1835, the people of Michigan in their first state constitution provided for a state university which would teach "such branches as the public convenience may hereafter demand for the promotion of literature, the arts and sciences."

In keeping with such goals, state universities began to offer new courses in the sciences, and in the modern languages even before the 1860's. As the century progressed they added huge scientific and professional schools—of agriculture, medicine, law, pharmacy, engineering, education, and commerce. They built vast extension programs to help people apply the findings of science to their everyday life and labor. By the end of the nineteenth century competent students in many parts of the country had access to advanced training in many highly specialized fields at little or no expense to themselves.

While university programs were expanding, organized research was also growing. Scientific laboratories were built; demonstration farms were established. It was not long before research findings in the new social sciences—history, economics, and political science—began to "step on the toes" of certain vested interests. While the governing boards of some state universities began to apply restrictive pressure, other such boards were convinced that the unrestricted search for truth was the only kind of university study that could serve the people well. They therefore sought to protect from special interests one of the most fundamental freedoms in the Western political heritage: freedom of inquiry. In so doing, they courageously discharged the great responsibilities which fall to lay boards of control in the American educational system.

An expanding university has gone hand in hand with the new discoveries that have accrued from freedom of inquiry. While not all boards of trustees have always courageously defended "that continuing and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found," many a board has steadfastly maintained the principle of academic freedom while under fire. They have realized along with the Founding Fathers that only as the public mind is illumined can the rights and liberties of the *Declaration of Independence* survive and prosper.

CHAPTER 5

Toward Professional Teacher Education

McCall's

TEACHER MEETS PRESIDENT

President Eisenhower greets Willard Widerberg, seventh-grade teacher in DeKalb, Illinois, who was named 1954 Teacher of the Year by *McCall's Magazine*.

HAVING entered upon a great experiment in the education of all American children and having committed themselves to the values of the public school, the American people were confronted with the problem of obtaining enough competent teachers to man the schools. School leaders, college educators, statesmen, and lay citizens worked at the problem in many ways, seeking constantly to improve the quality of the teaching staff while attempting to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding schools. The solutions they developed have contributed much to the success of American public schools. Yet the problem of teacher education persists and today poses new perplexities.

How Special Schools Were Established To Prepare Teachers

Massachusetts, one of the first states to commit itself to the maintenance of common schools, was also the first to establish special institutions for the education of teachers. In 1839-1840 the Commonwealth established three normal schools for the express purpose of preparing young men and women to staff

the state's public elementary schools. In their pioneering days these normal schools were able to offer only a rudimentary vocational training. They could do little more than review the common-school subjects of spelling, reading, writing, geography, and arithmetic, and then add elementary work in child development, in principles and methods of teaching, and in school management. Nevertheless, because the need for teachers was pressing, normal schools soon became accepted agencies of state school systems. By 1860 New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Illinois had followed the example of Massachusetts and established similar institutions.

From Cubberley's Public Education in the United States, *Houghton Mifflin Company*

FIRST NORMAL SCHOOL BUILDING, 1846

After the War Between the States, the rapid growth of public elementary and secondary education led to a related expansion of public teacher education. Virtually every state founded one or more normal schools in its efforts to meet insistent demands for teachers. By 1890 the normal schools were providing the most common form of professional education for American public-school teachers. Their efforts bore fruit; and the turn of the century saw an increasing number of teachers embarking on their careers with at least some specialized training for their jobs, however inadequate that training may have been.

As the first emergency need for teachers was met, however, the inadequacies of normal-school education began to loom larger. While the normal schools attracted into teaching many excellent young men and women and gave them an introductory education for their profession, the vocational emphasis in teacher-training institutions led to heated controversies with established colleges of liberal arts. Normal-school professors tended to regard liberal-arts academicians as narrowly subject-matter centered and "unscientific" in their ideas about the learning process, whereas the academician in turn regarded the normal-school people as shallow, too much concerned with pedagogical methods, and "unscholarly" in their inadequate command of knowledge. Then, too, the normal-school movement itself bred internal critics who voiced concern with its narrowness and vocationalism.

It became more and more obvious that overemphasis on methods and techniques could not hope to produce truly professional teachers any more readily than overemphasis on academic subjects alone. Lowering of standards, either in selecting or training teachers, could be condoned only under emergency. As the years passed, two related movements appeared representing efforts to improve and upgrade the quality of American teacher education: First, professional institutions began to recognize in their curricula the importance of the liberal arts and sciences; and second, liberal arts colleges as well as universities began to reassume more of their time-honored responsibilities in the preparation of teachers.

The first movement was clearly evident in the normal schools well before the turn of the century. The 1890's saw a concerted effort to improve the quality of normal-school programs. Curricula were broadened, the period of training lengthened, and standards of work raised. State after state converted its normal schools into teachers colleges, not merely by legislative fiat but by substantial improvements in the institutions them-

selves. Moreover, curricula were developed to train secondary- as well as elementary-school teachers. Then, in later years, teachers colleges were frequently broadened to become state colleges, with professional education as one element in a wider college program. Inasmuch as all of these institutions—normal schools, teachers colleges, and state colleges—had grown up within the framework of American public higher education, they remained constantly sensitive to the needs of a vastly expanding public-school system.

The second movement was also well under way by 1900. Soon after the War Between the States a number of American colleges and universities, both public and private, began to make special provision for training of teachers and school administrators. Schools and departments of education as well as teachers colleges were increasingly organized within the university framework, making teacher education more and more a task of the traditional liberal-arts disciplines and a concern of total college and university faculties. As institutions of this character expanded their work, they not only added to the supply of teachers, but also became important centers of research into the learning process and into the structure and administration of school systems. Moreover, they developed closer interrelations with other academic disciplines and segments of the university and tended to merge the materials of the liberal arts with those of professional education. Thus did many college and university faculties, in building new approaches to teacher education, begin creatively to answer the very criticisms they themselves had leveled only a few decades before.

How the Application of Research Findings Improved American Education

Teachers colleges and university departments of education, as agencies of higher education, are committed not only to disseminate knowledge but also to extend it. They are centers of

research, and from them research findings have issued in growing volume to guide the development of American public schooling. After 1865 some of America's ablest minds turned their attention to the study of young people and the way they learn. Pioneering work was done in educational psychology even before the turn of the century. "Under what conditions do children learn best?" the investigators asked. "How can we be sure they're learning what we're teaching?" Experiment after experiment by well-trained psychologists blew holes in time-honored theories regarding learning. The idea that certain studies "strengthen the reasoning powers;" the belief that the amount of subject matter learned increases directly with the number of hours devoted to homework; the assumption that children who know what is right will therefore do what is right —these and other commonly accepted principles came in for serious criticism as data negating them piled up on every side.

Other investigators began to study how young people grow. Myths and "old wives' tales" about children gave way before scientific evidence concerning physical, mental, and emotional development. Data about the emotional stresses and strains of adolescence, for example, told much about success and failure in high schools. Studies of the variation in physical and intellectual ability among children of the same age indicated the fruitlessness of treating every child of the same age alike. Investigations of the interests and motivations of young people at different age levels pointed the way to an educational program far more meaningful and realistic. Taking hold of this evidence,

Teachers College, Columbia University

other researchers began to work out new methods of teaching reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and other subjects. Scientific tests were devised to see whether these new methods were more effective than the old ones. On the basis of these tests, some proposals were discarded, others were retained and improved. In addition, new instructional materials were devised that would more effectively hold the attention of children. New textbooks were designed to appeal to the interests and everyday experiences of American children and in other ways to stimulate their desire to learn.

In all this research, mistakes and false starts were inevitable. Sometimes educational innovations which at first seemed promising turned out to be misleading. Fads and hobbies developed on a pseudo-scientific basis. But in spite of all the errors that accompanied trials, in spite of excesses and hasty judgments, the general trend was good. The scientific studies of learners and of learning contributed much to the improvement of teaching. By midpoint in the twentieth century more knowledge about children, about learning and teaching, about the organization and operation of schools, and about methods and materials of instruction was available than had ever been known before.

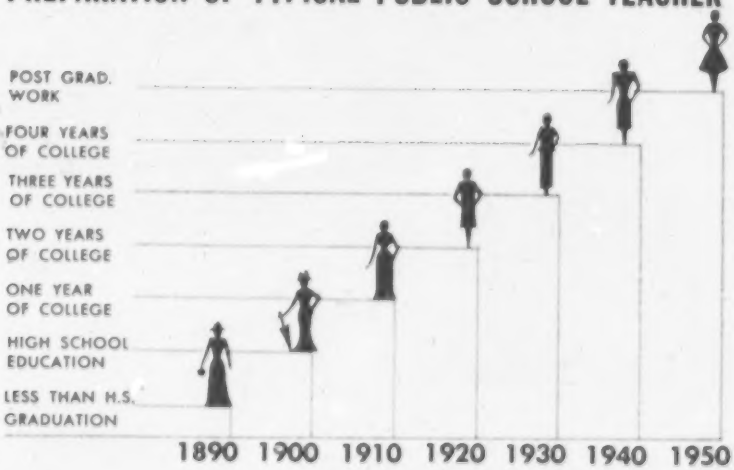
How Standards for Teachers Were Raised

Only as the initial emergency call for public-school teachers began to be met in the latter decades of the nineteenth century could educators direct more attention to raising the standards of teacher preparation. As knowledge about teaching and schools accumulated, both from field experience and from educational laboratories, the task of preparing teachers became more difficult. This was clearly reflected in rising requirements for admission to teacher education. Students had only to be graduates of the common schools to enter the first normal schools of the 1840's; a century later, prospective teachers had to be at least high-school graduates, and much of teacher education was

carried on even after graduation from college. Moreover, the length of professional preparation was itself increased to allow for more adequate general education and to provide for instruction in the new knowledge about children, about learning, and about the school as a social institution.

The improvement of teachers was also sought through certification requirements. Early certificates, haphazardly granted by town and county boards, were gradually superseded by certificates from state authorities. These requirements were formulated and established in a continuing cooperation between educational leaders and state authorities. By virtue of such requirements, individuals desiring to teach were obliged to obtain certificates, and teacher-training institutions had to become accredited. In order to teach, study in certain forms and fields of education was required. While the specific formulas for certification tended to vary from state to state and to undergo continuing analysis and change, the certificating and accrediting system, in general, resulted in improvement in teacher quality throughout the nation.

PREPARATION OF TYPICAL PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER



Source: Estimates by NEA Research Division

Finally, there was increasing provision for the education of teachers while in service. Through summer study, academic and professional courses within school systems, conferences, institutes, workshops, and conventions, practicing teachers sought and gained further insight into the arts and sciences, into professional knowledge, into the contemporary life and needs of America, and into the practical skills of their work. Devices of in-service training helped teachers substantially to better their work while on the job and enabled the teaching profession to pursue a continuing process of self-criticism, self-evaluation, and self-improvement.

With all of these great achievements, the task of finding and educating the teachers America needs is still far from completed. Thousands of American school children still attend half-time sessions for lack of qualified teachers; thousands of teachers are still teaching on emergency certificates indicating substandard professional preparation. The demand for teachers still exceeds the supply, and the recruitment of qualified personnel remains a crucial educational task. Teacher recruitment and education continue as problems to which both the profession and the public need to give careful and continuing attention if American schools are to carry out the Herculean responsibilities assigned to them.

CHAPTER 6

How Public Schools Have Served the American People

1.
Bakersfield (Calif.) High
Class of '08

2.
John Muir Technical High
(Pasadena, Calif.)
Class of '37

3.
Abraham Lincoln High
(Council Bluffs, Ia.)
Class of '24

4.
Grammar School No. 69 (N.Y.C.)
Class of '84

5.
Chelsea (Mass.) High
Class of '09

6.
Independence (Mo.) High
Class of '01

7.
Skowhegan (Me.) High
Class of '16

8.
Addison (N.Y.) Academy
Class of '91

9.
Beaumont
(Tex.)
Senior High
Class of '30

10.
Sioux City (Ia.)
Central High
Class of '28

11.
South Philadelphia (Pa.)
High for Girls
Class of '21

12.
Edison Technical High
(Seattle)
Class of '26

1
Aurora (Ind.) Hig
Class of '06

PUBLIC schools have become, in slightly more than a century, a basic part of American life. Their contributions have been made in a great variety of ways, often in close conjunction with the work of other institutions. Though it is difficult to isolate developments for which the public schools are exclusively responsible, one can identify many achievements in American life to which the schools have made essential contribution. What are some of these achievements, and what have they meant to the American people?

Public Schools Have Helped To Induct More Than Thirty Million Immigrants Into American Life

The American people are the product of one of the greatest human migrations in history. More than thirty million immigrants have come to the United States from all parts of the world. They have brought with them differing values, customs, languages, and habits of thought and action. These differences have at times seemed too great for the nation to encompass. But the great waves of migrants have been assimilated, the great divergencies utilized and integrated. For that achievement the

For picture credits and identifications see page 76

Detroit Public Schools

public schools are probably the single agency most responsible.

The public school has been for millions the chief pathway into American life. To the evening classes of the public school the newly arrived immigrant came to qualify for the priceless award of American citizenship. To the day classes of the public school he sent his sons and daughters that they might be prepared to take full part in the life of their new homeland. The public school received these immigrants and taught them. The extent to which immigrants and their children have become Americans and in turn served America is a first great measure of the success of the public school.

Public Schools Have Helped To Unite the American People

Beyond their contributions to the initiation of immigrants into American life, the public schools have helped to create a sufficient unity among all classes and groups and regions in America to keep a far-flung people in a vast and varied country united. In a century of unprecedented social change, during which the franchise was extended to all while the nation spanned a continent, public schools contributed magnificently to making "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

No clearer evidence of the value of a universal common education can be found than in the political history of the United States. No major, enduring political party has been organized on strict religious or ethnic or class or regional lines. Rather, there have been Catholics, Jews, and Protestants; Italian-

Americans, Polish-Americans Irish-Americans, and French-Canadian Americans; owners and workers; liberals and conservatives within every major political camp. Each major political party in the United States appeals to "all the people" — a people welded together by a common school in which children of all backgrounds have met and mingled and learned.

everybody? He made several crisp tackles. On offense, the Cumberland kid was merely as good as usual, connecting on three passes and sneaking for a score

LINEUP

Central High		East High
Oleson	LE	Veccinni
Dumbrowski	LT	MacGregor
Smith	LG	Kamaala
Okada	C	de Souza
Valdez	RG	Schmidt
Washington	RT	Kerchevsky
Descartes	RE	Cabot
Gottlieb	QB	Van Antwerp
Riley	LH	Chin
Adamatoulous	RH	Aroulian
Llewellyn	FB	Smythe

As you know, football coaches don't believe their own eyes, but wait until they've run the movies several times before trying to ana-

Public Schools Have Enriched the Spiritual Life of the American People

From its inception, the public school has concerned itself with moral and spiritual values. In so doing, it has recognized that the school cannot alone see to the entire spiritual education of youth; it must work in active partnership with home, church, and synagogue. The genius of the public-school system, however, is that it has for a century sought to develop in children the moral and ethical commitments which are common to all of the great religions. This common basis of ethical values has both raised the level of the nation's morality and left each individual free to pursue the religious dictates of his own conscience.

Public schools have always been concerned with such great moral commitments as the basic dignity of the individual human being, respect for lawful government, devotion to truth, and respect for individual excellence. Above all, the public schools have taught the great precept of brotherhood. It is easier to dislike the unfamiliar than that which is known from experience. The American child who attends the public school has learned, played, and grown up with children of many different religious

faiths and ethnic groups. In the give and take of growing up together, public-school children have learned the real meaning of brotherhood; they have become friends with children of all faiths. Only a common school can serve this great end.

Thus, while public schools are prohibited by their very nature from teaching sectarian religious doctrines, they have contributed immeasurably to the spiritual growth of the American people, to the ethical foundation of American democracy, and to harmonious working relations among the varied groups within the United States.

> Character education takes place every hour of the school day. It takes place when five-year-olds learn to take turns with the new toy rather than to fight for it; in the opening exercises of the country school as the children are asked by their teacher to explain the meaning of " . . . with liberty and justice for all"; on the playground when the "gang" tells the trouble-maker to play by the rules or get out;
>
> . . . in the eighth-grade history class which makes posters to illustrate the immortal ideals of the American Declaration of Independence—"all men are created equal . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights . . . life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness";
>
> . . . in the high school homeroom as the students decide what message to send to the girl who has been stricken with polio;
>
> . . . in the English class that studies Macbeth or the Vision of Sir Launfal;
>
> . . . on the class picnic, on the football field, in the rehearsal for the senior play, in the social-service project of the sociology class, in the community beautification project of the civics class;
>
> . . . in the developing insights into the nature of truth in the geometry class and the physics laboratory;
>
> . . . when a disturbed adolescent shares his troubles with a trusted counselor . . . when youth observe exemplary character in their teachers.
>
> —Willard E. Givens, ***The Public School,*** Annual Report of the Profession to the Public by the Executive Secretary of the National Education Association of the United States, 1951-52

West Lafayette (Indiana) Public Schools
—Photo by J. C. Allen and Son

Public Schools Have Helped To Make Real the American Principle of Equality of Opportunity

More than in any other realm of American life, perhaps, the door to opportunity has been open in education. For over a century, public schools have beckoned to the competent and industrious of all classes to seek the knowledge and skills that would enable them to serve themselves and their fellow men. Throughout the United States today are physicians, scientists, lawmakers, businessmen, judges, writers, artists, teachers, and skilled workers whose talents would be undeveloped and wasted had they not received their elementary, their secondary, and even

their advanced education at public expense. Indeed the roster of those who owe their positions of leadership to agencies of public education is long and distinguished and steadily growing. These leaders in turn serve millions of other Americans who have themselves derived from public education a wide variety of intellectual, physical, and aesthetic advantages. Because of these advantages, millions of individuals live happier, healthier, and more useful lives. For individuals in every segment of society, public schools have symbolized opportunity—the time-honored American opportunity to pursue happiness.

Public Schools Have Helped To Make the American Economy a Miracle of Production

Americans today enjoy a higher material standard of living and a shorter average working day than any other people in history. Indeed, the American economic system is a miracle of production. Many factors have gone to make this miracle, among them a wealth of resources, a genius for organization, a favorable geographical location, and a close relationship between education and the world of work.

Of tremendous import has been the contribution of the public school. Well before the end of the nineteenth century, both business and labor organizations were calling upon public high schools to serve the growing needs of American industry. Vocational courses, established to answer these demands, have since sent millions of skilled workers to the factories and shops and farms of America. Engineering schools and scientific departments in state as well as private universities have furnished a continuing flow of skilled personnel to lead in the improvement of industrial processes. In agriculture, state institutions have helped to provide the technical knowledge that has enabled American farms to feed not only Americans but additional millions of people all over the world.

When the business leaders of Massachusetts wrote Horace

Mann in the 1840's of the many ways in which common schools aided their efforts, they were setting an example which generations of their successors have emulated. In recent years leaders in business, industry, labor, and agriculture have spoken strongly and repeatedly in support of America's public schools. Informed Americans have long been aware that without universal public education the miracle of American production could never have come to pass.

The public schools are closer to each American family than any other tax supported institution. They are free, first because entrance to them does not depend on economic status; in a much deeper sense they are free because they are answerable to no special interest but to us, the free citizens in a free democracy. All citizens have the responsibility to use this freedom to defend and improve our public school system.

—***Economic Outlook,*** Department of Education and Research, Congress of Industrial Organizations, March 1954

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance which education has played in marking possible the present level of agricultural production in America.

—**Herschel D. Newsom,** President of the National Grange, 1952

If rising education levels are essential to the maintenance of a dynamic economy and a free society, an active interest in providing ever-better educational opportunity in your community is the essence of "Good Citizenship, Good Government and Good Business."

—***Education: An Investment in People,*** Education Department, Chamber of Commerce of the USA, 1954

If the United States remains the land of opportunity, then basically it must mean opportunity of access to education, so that our country can benefit from all the potential talent of its children.

—**Mark Starr,** Education Director, International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, American Federation of Labor, March 1954

All phases of American society are beneficiaries of the educational system. . . . The contribution of education to the whole American culture creates in each segment of society a responsibility for its support and development.

—Resolution, Congress of American Industry (National Association of Manufacturers), December 1948, in ***NAM News,*** 21 April 1954

New York Public Library

Public Schools Have Provided Keys to Knowledge and Understanding

By providing elementary schooling for virtually 100 per cent of the American people and secondary schooling for nearly 75 per cent of them, public schools have contributed basic keys to knowledge and understanding for all citizens. They have done this by disseminating two great skills: the skill of literacy and the skill of inquiry. Universal literacy does not in itself guarantee a free society; in a dictatorship, universal literacy may simply guarantee that the people will be able to follow orders. On the other hand, no free society can long endure without a high degree of literacy. If the people are to know, they must have the tools of knowing; and one of the major keys to knowledge is the ability to read. There are other ways to knowledge—listening and viewing—but to read is to enter freely into the best thoughts of past and present.

As literacy is a key to knowledge, so inquiry is a key to understanding. The wise man is he who can locate and examine evidence and, in the light of guiding principles, can make decisions on the basis of the evidence. It is in the realm of encouraging inquiry and reflection that modern public schools have made some of their most significant advances. For a long time, people assumed the teacher's job was done when children could read well. Today they see the importance of reading, but are equally concerned about getting children to think about what they have read and to inquire further into the problems that concern them. Thus concerned with both reading and inquiry, public schools have done much to equip people with keys to the knowledge and understanding essential to self-government.

Public Schools Have Nurtured Loyalty to the American Way of Life

To the extent that public schools have helped to provide the keys to knowledge and understanding, they have done much to realize and perpetuate the ideals of democracy. Yet they have done even more than this; they have helped inspire in successive generations deep respect and loyalty for the great principles of freedom, equality, and self-government. By pointing to American achievements and, indeed, shortcomings that need remedying, public schools have alerted the young to the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. By examining the controversies of American life against a background of essential American values, they have shown young people how to make up their

National Association of Manufacturers — Photo by Lambert

minds about issues that confront them. The public schools have inspired in the young not a narrow unreasoned patriotism which could easily be abandoned in crisis but rather a mature devotion which can withstand subtle propaganda and repulse the most direct challenge. In brief, literacy, inquiry, and loyalty have been the great ways in which public schools have helped to maintain the principles which stand at the core of the American heritage.

* * *

In these ways and others have the public schools justified the faith of the American people. Like other institutions, they are not perfect; like any institution, they have shortcomings. But their contributions have been signficant and lasting. The United States would not be so democratic, so prosperous, so satisfying to the individual, and so strong in mind and spirit as it is today were it not for the nation's record in developing and supporting public schools.

Identification and credits for montage, page 66:

1. Earl Warren—*Photo by Harris and Ewing*
2. Jackie Robinson
3. Nathan Pusey—*Photo by Fabian Bachrach*
4. Bernard M. Baruch—*Photo by Harris and Ewing*
5. Vannevar Bush—*Photo by Hessler*
6. Harry S. Truman
7. Margaret Chase Smith
8. Thomas J. Watson
9. Babe Didrickson Zaharias
10. Howard Mitchell—*Photo by Fabian Bachrach*
11. Marian Anderson
12. Edward R. Murrow
13. Elmer Davis

CHAPTER 7

Education in an Era of Decision

THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
They Won Their Fight For Better Schools
by Robert Crandall
How Good Are Our Schools?
KEEPING OUR SCHOOLS FREE
A BUSINESSMAN LOOKS AT EDUCATION
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ITS CRITICS
by V. T. THAYER
LET'S TALK SENSE ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS
NAM NEWS

THE public-school system is typically and purely American. The history of education in the United States makes it clear that the American people have evolved educational ideas and practices that are unique. Keyed to the development of responsible citizens and based on equality of opportunity in a democracy, the public schools are indigenous to the American way of life.

America's public schools embody the time-honored values of freedom, equality, and self-government. Indeed, the nation's program in education, as organized in public institutions for all American youth, is itself one of the essential values and distinguishing characteristics of the American tradition.

Today the United States seems to be entering a new era—an era in which the frontier country has become a world power, facing both the Atlantic and the Pacific. A revolution in science and technology has transformed our economy. A "manless land for landless men" has become settled, and the stream of immigration now flows slowly indeed. Dealing with complicated issues of economics and politics and cultural affairs and finding the task of maintaining the national economy and safeguarding

Photo by F. Clyde Wilkinson

the national security costly and complex, the nation is currently making a fresh examination of its way of life. The reappraisal is vast, unsystematic, deeply penetrating, and of far-reaching importance. And the reappraisal must inevitably be concerned with education, because education is so intimate and important an aspect both of the country's tradition and of its preparation for the future.

In the history of American public education two great creative periods stand out as particularly impressive. The first of these, extending roughly from 1830 to 1860, witnessed the establishment of the common-school system. It was a period in which citizens made up their minds about such issues as those debated by Horace Mann and his co-workers—issues concerning how a school system might best be organized, paid for, and controlled in order to advance democratic ideals. It was a period of controversy—for creativity and controversy are inseparable—but it was one in which the public decided that education for all should be provided, both as a service and as a safeguard of democracy.

"Who says I don't take an interest in his education? . . . don't I complain about taxes, find fault with the system, criticize the teachers? . . ."

Copyright Field Enterprises, Inc., Courtesy Chicago Sun-Times *Syndicate*

"I'M IN THE FOURTH GRADE, THIRD SHIFT, SECOND LAYER"

From The Herblock Book *(Beacon Press)*

More and More Pupils!
LET'S GET OUR SCHOOLS READY NOW!
SPACE DONATED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE
CONTRIBUTED BY YOUR OUTDOOR ADVERTISING COMPANY AS A PUBLIC SERVICE

National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools

CITIZENS ASSEMBLY ON EDUCATION—SAN FRANCISCO, 1954

A second outstanding creative period began in the 1890's and continued through World War I. It was a period in which citizens, accepting the framework of the common-school system, assigned new duties and responsibilities to public schools. An example can be drawn from the field of secondary education. At the beginning of the period a committee of American leaders —the "Committee of Ten"—issued a report (1893) on the kind of secondary education needed for American life; at its conclusion, another committee formulated the "cardinal principles" of American secondary education (1918). The first report viewed the secondary school as a highly selective agency which would train a small percentage of American youth in certain approved bodies of subject matter. The second report set forth an infinitely broader view of education, holding it the duty of the high schools to prepare all American youth for citizenship, health, vocation, family life, and a variety of other functions. The report in many ways crystallized the movement to make the public school in every respect a servant of democ-

racy. The difference between the two reports shows how much the nation's educational ideas had evolved in a quarter of a century.

Since World War II Americans have entered a third creative period. There is more concern with and thinking about education on the part of American citizens during current years than there has been for decades. This concern is inevitably accompanied by controversy, for conflicts of ideas are inevitable in decision-making. Creative and far-sighted decisions must be made by the American people during these years as to the role of education in the nation's life.

It is the conviction of the Educational Policies Commission that reappraisal of American educational policies and practices during this creative period is a helpful and hopeful thing. The Commission believes that such appraisal should involve full recognition of the values and services of the nation's unique system of public education. It believes that the great lessons of American educational experience have profound merit as guides for the future. That there are inadequacies in American education, no one doubts. Current reappraisal should identify these inadequacies and look toward their elimination; the reappraisal should also lead to reaffirmation of faith in the achievements and values of the educational system and to planning for their further development during the era now emerging. The basic values of the American educational heritage should be retained at the same time that new educational paths are charted. American education should continue to serve fully the great traditions and democratic goals to which the American people give allegiance.

CHAPTER 8

Public Education and the Future of America

THE complexities of modern life and the responsible role in world affairs the United States is called upon to play demand resolute facing of major problems involving national security and the general welfare. To meet the tasks which successive years bring, Americans must maintain an expanding economy, manage a complex government, retain the unity which encompasses their nation's diversities, assume a mature role in international counsel, and find leaders capable of handling wisely the momentous responsibilities placed upon them. Citizens must act with sensitivity, intelligence, and moral courage. Only by such means may America be strong and her democratic traditions secure.

The most important element in America's future is the quality of the American people—their character and ability, and the degree to which their talents are cherished and cultivated. Manpower is a first concern, both in the further development of a democratic way of life and in the safeguarding of security and welfare. Consideration of the nation's problems and needs in the coming years leads inescapably to consideration of its greatest resource—human beings.

The American program of public education has a unique relationship to the cultivation of the human talents that are particularly needed in facing the problems of America's future. Even a brief survey of those problems and of the characteristics and potentialities of life in the America now emerging evidences the importance of education and suggests the kind of education needed for the years that are immediately ahead.

Maintaining the Moving Equilibrium of a Complex Democratic Society

Life in the United States has grown increasingly complex during the last century, and there is every indication that the complexities will multiply even further. To keep society moving forward and operating efficiently, American citizens must learn many things: They must have at hand a wide range of factual information; they must be familiar with the unwritten laws and mores of American behavior; they must master a variety of skills essential to that behavior. "Know-how" in twentieth-century America is not confined to engineers and scientists; there is a "know-how" of ordinary living in our complex society which must be learned by the whole population. In order to face the future with assurance, America requires a citizenry possessed of the basic information, attitudes, feelings, and social skills necessary for operating the American way of life. The future would be jeopardized if the level of learning did not measure up to demands, or if any sizable part of the population grew up possessed of alien outlooks and habits.

American schools have been traditionally concerned with teaching the modes and skills of behavior in a society that is characterized by wide opportunity for self-advancement and in which every person is expected to "pull his own oar." These basic skills include the traditional three R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In these matters the schools have done an impressive job. In spite of vast numbers of immigrants and of an extraordinary expansion of education to reach virtually all children of school age, the level of literacy in the United States has steadily advanced.

Beyond the traditional fundamentals, however, are many additional learnings basic to American behavior. There are, for example, the essential attitudes and skills of teamwork, initiative, and honesty. There are such habits as personal cleanliness and common courtesy. There are such matters as reading newspapers with judgment, utilizing telephone and telegraph efficiently, driving trucks and automobiles safely, and handling efficiently the tools and machines essential to modern commerce and industry and agriculture. These service functions of public education in equipping people to operate their society with readiness and skill are vital alike to individual and to national welfare and efficiency.

No one would argue that the schools are entirely successful in achieving the goals of education for living in a complex democratic society; but if it were not for the work of schools, the level of behavior in American living would not be so high as it now is—nor so high as it must be for the future. An uneducated population could not utilize health agencies to lengthen life and raise the level of physical well-being; could not sustain publishing houses and museums and developments in the arts and sciences; could not operate a vast and harmonious system of public education based on local initiative and

control; could not maintain community chests, welfare councils, and the variety of cooperative ventures essential to community and regional and national welfare. The operation of a high-level, democratic, and growing society rests upon a foundation of acquired learnings, and a broad system of public education is essential for the establishment of that foundation in succeeding generations.

Maintaining a Productive Economy

American industry continues to be an expanding industry; the commercial activity essential to the nation's health grows increasingly complex; the scientific revolution is applied on an accelerating scale to American agriculture. The future of the United States, already grown into an industrial-commercial-agricultural giant, requires a population facile in operating the economic machinery of American life. As there is a social "know-how" requisite for American living, so there is also a level of economic behavior essential for national prosperity. The increasing mechanization of factories, farms, and offices requires progressively skillful workers—and an ever-greater number of them. And even more important, these skills must embrace not only mechanized operations and controls but also extraordinarily complex matters of personal behavior and human relations in vocational situations.

The miracle of the American economy is predicated upon a broad foundation of public education. This education begins

Soil Conservation Service—Photo by Van Dersal

with the literacy which enables a man to read directions and be alert to danger warnings. It reaches into the whole range of basic skills in operating the tools and machinery essential to the production and distribution of goods. It involves comprehension by the individual of his role in the economic process, requires the identification and cultivation of managerial abilities, and extends into the cherishing of effective human relations. Of crucial concern to the nation's future is the extent to which education provides Americans with fundamental vocational skills and essential insights into economic process. Such skills and insights constitute the educational base on which modern industry, agriculture, and commerce rest.

Such skills in mechanical operation, in managerial ability, and in constructive and considerate human relations as are requisite in the economy of America's future are not automatically or easily acquired. An extensive program of school instruction is required for their attainment. Such a school program must reach every segment of the nation's population, for the varieties of needed talent are widely distributed among all the ethnic and racial and economic and geographic groups that make up the American people. Moreover, the needed school program must be intimately related to society—not a narrowly isolated or insulated form of education. It needs to be a program capable of guiding students and of cultivating all available talents; as such it must provide the counseling and advisory services necessary to help individuals find their most satisfying roles in the economic process. Finally, it needs to be an educational system capable of providing essential economic skills without developing a separate "working class" education. Only in this way can the democratic character of America be preserved and expanded.

Making Democratic Government Work

The ideal of popular self-government, rooted in American tradition and aspiration, is today under attack from both fascist and communist ideologies. The maintenance of a working political democracy in the United States is a crucial task in the years immediately ahead—crucial both to the nation and to the rest of the free world.

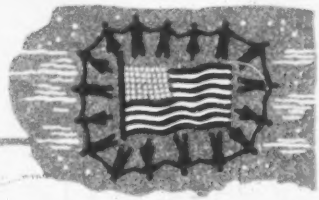
Even the briefest glance at the basic political questions rising before America in rapid array indicates the need for an electorate able to make judgments on a bewildering variety of critical problems. Voters are asked to come to conclusions on issues concerning national security, foreign policy, world trade, price controls, tax policies, public welfare, governmental efficiency, and party programs. In 1822 James Madison counseled that "a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." In the twentieth century, the knowledge of which Madison wrote has been expanded to a point where expert specialists can hardly encompass its divers fields. The individual citizen, with such general knowledge as the educational program can provide him, must rely heavily upon experts of his choosing and must exercise his judgment to the highest limit. Citizens working with specialists continue to have the democratic responsibility for making public decisions that determine public policy.

Civic behavior in the United States is not at so high a level as many wish nor at so low a level as some alarmists fear. It is true, for example, that a disturbingly large proportion of legally qualified voters do not cast ballots in ordinary elections.

Standards of judgment on public issues sometimes seem low; demagogues on occasion endanger the nation by obscuring real issues and confusing sound judgment. But in spite of such inadequacies the record of American political behavior is on the whole impressive. More people are involved in making more decisions about more complex public questions in today's America than at any earlier moment in history. That record rests upon a foundation of education both formal and informal in character. Without the development of a public education focused on the general welfare and on responsible citizenship, the nation's political record could not have become so impressive as it is.

In view of the challenges to democratic government and in the light of pressing political problems, domestic and international, the American people during the period ahead may well seek to intensify education for democratic citizenship. A public-education program, comprehensive to reach the total electorate and far-sighted to emphasize the basic moral and intellectual commitments inherent in democracy, is necessary for a sound American future.

Safeguarding Democratic Diversity Within Bonds of Unity



In a future with inevitable strains and tensions, the American people urgently need the vibrant strength that arises from voluntary unity. "United we stand; divided we fall" is a maxim rooted in the nation's history since the years of Benjamin Franklin. The pressures and problems of contemporary life

make unity both more important for the national welfare and more difficult to maintain. Population pressures seem certain to increase. Forces, whether foreign or domestic, that tend to array American against American are insidious and dangerous. Undue separatism or factionalism among the American people, whether based on regional or racial or ethnic or economic or religious or political or cultural factors, could lead to national disaster.

The American tradition, whether expressed in cultural or political or educational terms, emphasizes a voluntary unity that allows for diversity within the encompassing framework of common values. Such a unity, resting upon cultural pluralism, does not arise automatically in a society as diverse and far-flung as is America. If unity is to be maintained, citizens have to be conscious of it as a goal and have to work toward its achievement. In developing the unity which was and is prerequisite for American growth, a comprehensive public-school system has been a potent influence. The universal common school, embracing children of widely different backgrounds, has been a uniquely effective agency for unifying the diversities which democracy welcomes.

Realizing the Nation's Intellectual and Aesthetic Potential

America will inevitably leave its cultural stamp deeply on the pages of twentieth-century history. Will that stamp be made by "men of action" or by "men of thought"—or by some unique fusion of the highest qualities of each? With the absorbing task of settling a continent now completed, with the resources

for a renaissance of cultural life within grasp, and with the sobering, maturing responsibilities of world leadership falling upon the nation, the cultivation of intellectual and aesthetic talents becomes doubly important for the future of America and for the future of the world. Through cultural achievements matching its material achievements, the United States can fulfill its historical role.

Achievement of cultural distinction for the nation lies partly in the earlier identification of talent, both intellectual and aesthetic, and in its ever more rigorous development. In an earlier publication, *Education of the Gifted*, the Educational Policies Commission has pointed out: "That society is wise which allows the new ideas and creative work of its genius to find expression." The Commission, recognizing that "waste of talent has occurred in the past and is occurring at present," recommended that "reduction of such waste in the future should be a major objective of social and educational policy." The search for talent requires a universal system of education reaching all the children of all the people. The education of that talent—to which schools are increasingly giving attention—requires heavier emphasis on intellectual and aesthetic standards.

The full cultivation of talent that is essential to democratic development and to national leadership calls not only for identification and education of the particularly gifted, but also for greater emphasis on intellectual and aesthetic matters in the education of all citizens. With a higher standard of living and more leisure time than the world has heretofore known, the American people now have an unprecedented opportunity for individual development. This opportunity may lead to the "pursuit of happiness" in the sense in which Jefferson wrote, or it may lead to frustration, unhappiness, and the deterioration of individual talents. Whether the

Christian Science Monitor—
Photo by Converse

leisure that industrial progress makes possible is used for constructive ends or leads to a corrosive and negative escapism, may well be a crucial factor in shaping the American future.

The public schools, with emphasis on the development of latent talents, may do much to enable all Americans to achieve the individual stature of cultivated persons. By opening up the avenues of literature, arts, and sciences, of hobbies, of sports and athletics, the schools may contribute to the possibilities of self-realization. By raising standards of aesthetic and moral judgment and of intellectual distinction, the schools may contribute both to the happiness of the individual and to the culture of society. By providing opportunities for both children and adults to develop standards of taste and criteria of judgment, the educational system may be a bulwark against the submergence of individuality and against the excesses of uncultured, unthinking, unaesthetic use of leisure. Only by the fruits of education may vast numbers of Americans pursue effectively the wholesome satisfactions of cultured life in modern society. Only by an education that establishes the prestige of intellectual standards and aesthetic tastes among the total population can the cultural potential of the United States be realized as a factor in national character and world leadership.

Newark (New Jersey) Public Library—Photo by Zane

Maintaining Moral and Spiritual Values

"Whether we consider the social effects of recent wars," wrote the Educational Policies Commission in 1951, "the remoteness of workers from the satisfactions of personal achievement, the mounting complexity of government, the increasing amount of aimless leisure, the changing patterns of home and family life, or current international tensions, the necessity for attention to moral and spiritual values emerges again and again. Moral decisions of unprecedented variety and complexity must be made by the American people."

Even in a context of religious heterogeneity Americans have over the decades become singularly unified in allegiance to common moral and spiritual values. On these values they have built their individual lives and discharged their social and civic responsibilities. These values include: respect for the dignity and worth of the human personality; the moral responsibility of the individual; the superiority of free cooperation to authoritarian domination and involuntary servitude; the preferability of common consent, cooperatively arrived at, to arbitrary enforcement; devotion to truth and to the search for truth; the brotherhood of man; and the abiding importance of the life of the spirit, with freedom for individuals to seek spiritual satisfaction in the religion of their choice. The common schools have taught these values to succeeding generations of Americans and through them have nurtured a moral unity within which a diversity of religious commitments has flourished.

Moral courage, with emphasis upon the responsibilities and duties of free men in a democratic society, is a requisite in American life for the future. The public schools have a unique role to play in developing the kind of cohesive morality necessary for the nation to endure the stresses of domestic growth and international leadership.

Discharging World Responsibilities

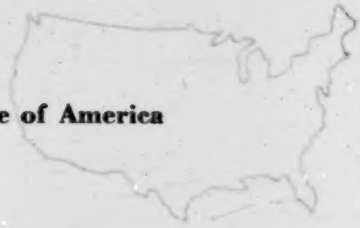
As has been indicated, the United States now bears an unprecedented burden of international responsibility. The maintenance in America of a democratic society, a productive economy, an efficient government, and a high level of cultural outlook and moral conviction is important not only to Americans but also to the entire world.

Interrelationships among modern nations, destined to grow closer and even more complex, face the United States with delicate problems of immense magnitude. The circumstances of the proximate future require a broad outlook on world problems, a sensitivity toward human values, a background of knowledge and high skill in action on the part of all Americans who participate in the democratic process. Discharging world responsibilities is an integral part of the American future, which calls for educational preparation of the highest calibre. The responsibilities of education for the discharge of world responsibilities extend like the sinews of a nervous system throughout the whole body of education.

Finding Democracy's Leaders

Democracy needs in its service the ablest leaders it can command. The need for leaders of highest quality is particularly important when authoritarian forces, domestic and foreign, challenge democracy. In politics, in business, in agriculture and industry, in the professions—indeed, in every realm of economic, social, political, and cultural life—the tasks of educating and recognizing competent and enlightened leadership are steadily becoming more important. Public officials and private leaders in every field need an insight and education for tomorrow's duties far beyond that demanded in earlier years. Individual competence, plus cooperation among specialists, are necessary to operate American society at its highest level.

American leaders, in public life or in private occupation, come not from one class or one economic level; they rise from every section of the people. The country needs an educational system which attracts them from every source—a school program which provides for the talented an education appropriate for their gifts but which does not divorce them from the greater society. Such an educational program must nurture mutual respect between leaders and followers; it must promote the social mobility of talent by urging it in the direction of worthy and rewarding careers.



Public Education and the Future of America

Faith in public education rests ultimately on two beliefs: that a particular kind of education must be designed to support a particular way of life, and that public education will best support the American way of life. The Founding Fathers were convinced that a society dedicated to freedom, equality, and self-government demanded special educational commitments and institutions. Those who built America's public schools believed public education to be a special instrument for the maintenance of a democratic society through the cultivation of worthy and responsible persons.

The basic qualities in the American concept of public education have enhanced value for today—and for tomorrow. As the American people appraise the role of public education in meeting the needs of the nation, they may reaffirm their loyalty to the qualities of an educational system which has served the country well. As they survey the services which public education may render to the nation in a critical and creative moment of its history—matching those services against apparent national and world needs—they will find in the nation's educational past worthy guides and goals for America's future.